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**'I don't see colour': Teacher discourses of integration in a
selection of desegregated schools in Cape Town.**

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for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Date: 1 October 2009

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the discourses twenty three teachers in desegregated classrooms in Cape Town schools adopt toward integration and various constructions of difference. Discourse analysis reveals how the constructions of language, class and culture are being positioned as signifiers for difference, in place of race. Teachers tend either towards 'colour-consciousness' or 'colour-blindness' in their discourses of race, and many white teachers demonstrate equality approaches toward different learners. Language as a difference is being used as a 'gate-keeper' to resist integration in schools. The construction of the past is problematic among some teachers, with the tendency to evade impacts the past still has on learners today.

Most teachers adopt 'dominant' approaches to teaching with diversity. These include the use of assimilatory, celebratory and colour-blind practices, which reinforce white privilege and deflect challenges to positions of power. This is also done by denying differences created in the past. A few teachers did provide examples of non-dominant discourses toward change, including the adoption of a 'diversity grammar', teaching for social justice, and the use of border pedagogies. These approaches encourage learner emancipation and dialogues about diversity and difference.

A variety of structural and personal factors impact on the discourses of teachers, such as race and age, and the lack of diversity training and support for schools and teachers. An increased understanding of backgrounds, cultures and identities of learners would greatly assist teachers with diverse classes. Many teachers rely on multiculturalist tendencies passed down to them by their institution or training, and teaching for change is left almost entirely up to teachers themselves, with little support from schooling institutions and the Department of Education. However, some teachers *are* choosing to deal with these challenges proactively, and form the basis of a group of empowered teachers, who can set new standards for the future. The thesis provides recommendations for better support toward this empowerment.

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I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness

(Franz Fanon, 1986)

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University of Cape Town

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As I am led out of the school building the winter rain pours down around us and the wind rattles the broken windows. I am informed that this school is better off than most, and that their annual budget is one million Rand, (a lot less than some schools across the M5 who receive seven million – but a lot more than others who receive only three hundred thousand). They are struggling with drugs and bullying, and just the other day they had a record absenteeism of one third of their teachers. How is it possible to go on like this? I wonder. I reach for the door and try to push it open but can't quite do it. The principal steps forward and gives it a good kick. 'This is how we open doors in the Cape Flats', he says. I laugh with him, but walk out with pain and confusion in my heart. How can our country hope to educate future generations when we have so little respect for those who hold crucial positions of responsibility?

As institutions that shape our country's youth and their development, schools play a critical role in the effort to re-structure and develop society. This research on teacher discourses is set within the context of a changing South Africa, one which is striving for democratic practices, but still straining under the many legacies of apartheid. This is particularly visible in the educational sector.

Under the Bantu Education Act, schools were segregated according to race. There was grossly unequal access to education for learners, with white schools receiving disproportionately more resources than black schools. Since the change of government in 1994 and the promulgation of the South African Schools Act in 1996, many policies have been put in place to “encourage the process of desegregation, intended to imply full integration” (Vandeyar and Jansen, 2008, 9). In reality however, schools have not achieved integration, and most are still characterised by dominant cultural and linguistic hegemonies. Although the new democratic government has taken large and admirable steps toward inclusion and the provision of increased resources in education, there is still a long way to go.

The research was conducted as part of a larger study established by INCUDISA (Intercultural and Diversity Studies) at the University of Cape Town, which aimed to shed light on methods teachers are employing in managing desegregated schools and classrooms. Kandaswamy

highlights the need for cultural sensitivity and understanding, suggesting that the classroom “is not a space outside of society, and students and teachers do not check their histories at the door when they enter it. Rather, the classroom reflects the inequalities in the world around us” (2007, 7). In the increasingly diverse classrooms of South Africa, teachers are facing roles that were previously not required of them. They are expected not only to be educators, but also mediators, counsellors, carers and activists. These roles require a deep understanding of their own identities as well as their learners’ backgrounds and identities – be that racial, gender, religious, historical, cultural, or linguistic. This requires skills with which to optimise learning by including, involving and respecting each learner’s background. There has been very little support and training to assist teachers with this new challenge. Many still cling to traditional methods of teaching and assessment, or find their own ways of dealing with diversity, as reflected in teachers’ discourses.

This study aims to discover these discourses and approaches to diversity, the ways teachers cope with change, and possible explanations for these discourses. It seeks to explore, through a critical multicultural approach, teachers’ discursive conceptions of race, language, culture and the past, and their attitudes towards social justice in schools. Obviously the past cannot be separated from any study of this nature, and many (or most) of the challenges with integration are a consequence of historic segregation.

Through a discourse analysis of teachers’ narratives, the study explores ways of coping with multicultural classrooms. Discourse analysis allows me to access teachers’ attitudes towards diversity in schools, and view “ways in which society gives voice to [issues like] racism” (Wetherell and Potter, 1992, 3). The study also explores the critical lack of training and support for teachers in the challenge of educating diverse learners.

The research also had personal significance as I view teachers as critical agents of change in our country. I believe they deserve a great deal more support, both from government and the public, and need to be far better resourced. At the same time as retrieving knowledge from the teachers interviewed, it is hoped that this research may highlight the need for further research and support in the future.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research situates itself within a ‘critical theory’, whereby researchers become conscious that a variety of forms of knowledge are produced, depending on what is examined. A critical perspective is adopted in order to uncover different ‘truths’ and discourses that arise through teachers’ narratives. Here the search for ‘realism’ is abandoned, and more attention is paid to the ways researchers shape the production and interpretation of knowledge (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005).

Marx was the original influence for critical theory protagonists, in challenging the accepted ideologies of capitalism. Critical theory is generally understood as the product of the Frankfurt School of philosophical thought, which was guided by thinkers such as Horkheimer, Marcuse, Adorno, Habermas, and Korsch. In the rejection of positivism, critical theory involves a “struggle for emancipation” (Held, 2004, 20) in the analysis of social practices. It also views ‘democratic’ education as problematic, as individuals are acculturated to feel comfortable in positions of power and subordination (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005). Critical theory “offers a lens for understanding the role of schools in perpetuating and subverting the race, class, and gender interests of state and society” (Jansen, 2009a, 256).

Theorists influenced by critical theory with an educational focus include Bourdieu, Foucault, Friere, Giroux, Aronowitz, and McLaren. These thinkers point out that there is a difference between *schooling* (aimed at social control), and *education* (aimed at empowerment and growth) (McLaren, 1989). Friere’s work is crucial to this research, as his ideas strive to “make education meaningful in a way that makes it critical and, hopefully, emancipatory” (Giroux, 1985, xiv). The writers that promulgate critical thinking in education and who influence this particular research project more strongly, include Frankenberg, Jansen, Carrim, Sayed, Francis, Soudien, Chisholm, Hemson and Vandeyar. These authors base their ideas within a social justice context, and highlight the need for adopting inclusive and responsive educational practices.

Although it can be criticised for ‘taking sides’ towards liberation (Jansen, 2009a), critical theory aims to see the world through the eyes of those denied economic or racial justice. This research

therefore assumes a critical multicultural stance in education – as put forward by McLaren (1994). Through this, claims such as ‘colour-blindness’ and approaches involving assimilation and contributionist methods are rejected, and a critical analysis of whiteness is imperative. Within critical multiculturalism, knowledge and ‘difference’ are viewed as social constructions (McLaren, 1989), and vary according to powerful institutional and social structures. It also acknowledges that culture is in a constant state of transition, and is called into being by politico-ideological processes. In an ideal world, educational institutions should be transformed to deconstruct the social and cultural relations in which meaning is formed. Many schools, however, are not preparing learners adequately for the demands of a sophisticated and changing economy, neither do they encourage them to think critically and creatively, in order to enable them to make effective choices in life (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985). Critical pedagogy supports “schooling for self and social empowerment... [and scrutinises schooling] in terms of race, class, power and gender” (McLaren, 1989, 162). It also views whiteness as *constructed* and *dominant*, and challenges its positioning as the invisible norm. It requires recognition of the networks of economics and privilege that whiteness still entails, and a challenge to this status quo.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Situating the research

South Africa has for centuries had a history of segregation. Education policies reflected this segregated and inequitable social environment (Vandeyar, 2008), and were shaped by racist discourses (Tikly, 1993). The new government of 1994 brought with it democracy and desegregation of schools, but desegregation did not automatically lead to integration. Teachers and learners continue to face problems of division, for exclusion, racial and cultural prejudice is still endemic in classrooms (Carrim, 1998). These factors need to be viewed within the historical context, which is “structurally linked to wider social relations and the economic, political and social fabric of society” (Vally and Dalamba, 1999, 4). As Parameswaran writes, schools are often institutes of discrimination, which “perpetuate the trend of keeping historical minorities away from political, educational and economic opportunities” (2007, 53). Many research and educational theories and policies focus on integration by means of multicultural education, but often these tend towards assimilationist and colour-blind approaches.

This chapter will examine the literature surrounding teachers’ discourses of desegregation. This includes integration, training, and multicultural education in its various forms in South Africa. The thesis specifically examines teachers’ discourses and approaches to change. The literature surrounding this subject is not wide, but writers who have focused on it include Dornbrack (2008), Eyber (1997), Eyber et al. (1997), Francis and Hemson (2007a), Geschier (2008), Hemson (2006), Kasiram (1993), Nkomo and Vandeyar (2008), Price (2001), Skuy and Vice (1997), Soudien (1994b), and Vice (1991). Common findings in these studies include teacher attempts to be democratic and non-racial, by adopting contributionist and colour-blind stances. In these situations, language and cultural issues come to the fore in place of race as divisive factors (Eyber, 1997).

Teachers’ discourses are framed through shared social realities, which inform members’ understanding of themselves (Steyn, Grant and Van Zyl, 2001). It is thus pertinent to examine the narratives and discourses through which teachers situate themselves, in order to understand

the attitudes and approaches toward increasing difference in classrooms. Teachers' conceptions of diversity and integration affect their openness to difference, and their affirmation of student experiences and perspectives. It also influences their ability to challenge oppression and name privilege (especially whiteness) (Francis and Hemson, 2007a).

The need for training to deal with extra-academic issues is urgent and essential, but unfortunately few studies offer recommendations for remediation. Francis and Hemson (2007a) provide useful recommendations towards teaching for social justice. Two South African resources which aim at assisting teachers directly in transformative education include Eyber, Dyer and Versfield's *Resisting Racism* handbook (1997), and the 'Early Learning Resource Unit's' *Shifting Paradigms* (Koopman, 1997).

3.1.1 Desegregation and integration

After 1994 many people presumed that learners would mix naturally, and that teachers would be able to cope with mixed classes without assistance. For the majority of schools, desegregation remains a 'mechanical process', involving only the physical contact of learners and teachers (Dolby, 2001). The longer schools remain segregated, the longer the boundary lines of division remain (Jansen, 2009a). Nkomo, McKinney and Chisholm (2004) describe integration as addressing divisions along *all* lines of difference, including race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, religion and gender. Integration goes beyond mechanical desegregation, and moves toward encouraging meaningful interaction amongst all learners in all school activities. It requires all members of school communities to be involved in a democratic school environment, which promotes inclusivity and social cohesion. This includes an interrogation of contact within school institutional arrangements, relations, and policies (Vandeyar and Killen, 2006). Integration involves deep changes in attitudes and behaviour patterns of learners, teachers and parents from both dominant and minority groups (Naidoo, 1996).

Sadly however, *integration* has not automatically occurred (Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna, 2004, Soudien, 2004, Vally and Dalamba, 1999), as "desegregation *per se* does not lead to predictable and meaningful changes in the attitudes of groups to each other" (Du Toit, 1995, 213). The dominant focus of desegregation remains racial (Soudien, 2004), and it does not take into account actual relations between teachers and learners. Vally and Dalamba (1999)

comment that racism in schools will not disappear simply because schools have become desegregated. Many papers state that teachers have a responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for learning, but there is insufficient reflection on how to go about achieving integration. As le Roux and Möller (2002) state, teachers cannot teach what they do not know.

3.1.2 Policy

Giroux writes that schools are reproductive sites that “provide the knowledge, skills and social relations necessary for the functioning of the capitalist economy and dominant society” (1985, i). It is therefore imperative that these sites are examined and challenged, and new opportunities for teaching, learning, and transformation be explored. Since 1994, there have been significant changes at policy level on the education and training landscape in South Africa (Chisholm, 2004). However, these policy changes have not been sufficient for real transformation and integration to take place and there is little visible evidence of practical change (Moletsane, Hemson and Mutukrishna, 2004). Current policy shifts tend to be fundamental in nature, and often polarise black-white desegregation. This one dimensional approach fails to address complex realities, including ‘intra-black’ conflicts, and does not necessarily lead to deracialisation of schools (Carrim, 1998).

Jansen is concerned that policy and departmental decisions are often only political moves, and Sayed and Jansen state that “policy ideals seldom match classroom realities” (2002, 2). It appears that although there are policies in place, their *implementation* is slow and inadequate. As Orfield (2004) points out, the formation and issuing of policy does not mean change will be realised. Moletsane et al. (2004) relate this to a lack of commitment to change within schools, as well as inadequate school and teacher development for change. When policy *is* used and interpreted, however, it “does not robustly engage with the histories of race and class” (Sayed and Soudien, 2005, 123). Macro-level policy initiatives tend to homogenise and generalize ‘race’, and “do not facilitate micro-level change in deracialising schooling” (Carrim, 1998, 302).

3.1.3 Diversity

“Diversity is one of the greatest challenges facing democratic South Africa, with its wide range of people... and its deep legacy of social inequality” (McKinney, 2005, 1). Although any definition of diversity will never quite be complete, it is necessary for this study to unpack the

major contributors to this abstract concept. Diversity includes not only customs, traditions, religion, socio-economic status, language, sexuality, disability, age, race, HIV status, gender, region and ethnicity, but also the historical context of group struggles and past injustices which every person brings with them into the classroom (Paramaswaran, 2007). Teaching for social justice and critical multicultural education come into context here in terms of understanding the multiple positions and viewpoints of learners.

The inclusion of diversity in teaching is a great challenge to teachers in multicultural classrooms, most especially when resources and support are hard to come by. Meier confirms that “attempts at providing equitable, quality education for learners with diverse backgrounds, interests and abilities are not succeeding” (2005, 171). In their study, Vandeyar and Killen (2006) found that teachers are slow in adapting their teaching methods to diverse learners. They are often reluctant to accommodate linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Muthukrishna (2002) thus calls for a change in attitude; moving away from blaming problems on individual learners, to accommodating each learner as a participant in the classroom.

3.1.4 Language

There is a strong relationship between language and issues of knowledge and power (Giroux, 1992). Through language, certain identities and ‘ways of being’ are privileged, and elevated in importance (Soudien, 2004). In South Africa, this remains male, white and English. This perpetuates the ‘norm’ from which dominant discourse is shaped. Teaching in English enforces and legitimises power relations and master narratives. Teachers therefore need to make the discourse of power and privilege visible and a ready part of discussions and language (Wildman and Davis, 1995).

“The medium of instruction is directly linked to issues of access and power” (Vandeyar and Killen, 2006, 387), because it can exclude or disadvantage those whose first language is different from the ‘norm’. An intrinsic part of the transformation and integration of schools is thus inclusion and encouragement of the use of mother-tongue languages (Ramphele, 2009). This would promote the acceptance and normalisation of languages other than English and Afrikaans. It is also vital for the optimisation of education for English-as-a-second-language (ESL) learners. Mda (2004) writes that for African language speaking learners, studying in

English is frustrating and demoralising. This negates ‘multicultural’ school initiatives. Learners who learn in their second language have a higher risk of failure and dropping out, because they have both to learn the language and acquire academic content knowledge in that language (Ovando, 2000). Yet, we face the predicament that most institutions continue to be dominated by English, and English still offers greater socio-economic and educational benefits (Mda, 2004). Although on paper all eleven official languages of South Africa are recognised, English and Afrikaans prevail as the key languages giving access to social and economic empowerment.

Ramphele (2009) writes that education authorities are ignoring the basic principles of learning by choosing English as the dominant language of instruction. This alienates learners from their cultural roots, and parents from participation. It also leads to dramatically low levels of numeracy and literacy among learners. Vandeyar and Killen (2006) argue that the aversion to teaching in African languages in South Africa immediately disadvantages ESL learners. It takes away the basic rights of the learners and disempowers them. It prevents the access path of foundational knowledge through language codes, which are already embedded in a system of ideological constraints. This hinders learners’ opportunities for gaining further knowledge. “The questions we ask and the statements we make are preceded by historical frames which delimit the range of our inquiry” (Sleeter and McLaren, 1995, 20). This may often not be taken into account by teachers. Our experiences are made sense of and lived *through* language. Learners are disempowered if they are not able to express themselves fully in the teachers’ language – or if teachers are not able to understand their language. Mda (2004) found that a great limiting factor for ‘home’ language teaching is the lack of pre-service training to learn an African language.

3.1.5 Socio-economics

Through desegregation, social class has emerged as a “new separating factor in South African schools and society” (Vandeyar and Jansen, 2008, 11). Class has increasingly come to replace race as a divisive factor in schools, because the South African education system has started to favour an “expanding, racially-mixed middle class” (Chisholm, 2004, 7). Soudien writes that we are undergoing a “profound social realignment of the country” (2004, 111), which is affecting integration as well as acceptance in schools. He challenges us to view class as a cohesive factor of society that could provide a base for understanding integration in schools.

Although educational policy states that schools should admit any child, “it is not possible... for poorer children to move into wealthier schools” (Soudien, 2004, 106). Better resourced schools have the means to keep poorer children out. In reality, low socio-economic status of schools has an adverse affect on overall achievement, and the schools’ capacity to enhance teaching and learning conditions (Kent, 2003, Phurutse, 2005). *Most* schools face great economic pressures, and do not have sufficient resources to assist poor learners. Indeed, Francis and Muthukrishna (2004) write that even equal access to schools does not guarantee equity in the *quality* of education across schools.

3.2 Multicultural education

Having situated the study, this section will examine the various means and forms of multicultural education. Prior to 1994, most education was segregated and thus deliberately mono-cultural. Currently, multicultural education is the dominant form of teaching in South Africa. With its differing understandings and definitions however, it sorely requires reconsideration.

The concept of multicultural education originated from the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960’s. It was a response to political and social inequities, and recognised that “schools and social institutions reflect and perpetuate a hegemonic social order” (Ravitch, 2005, 3). Multicultural education was often viewed as a site of political struggle, in a reaction to the dominant white, English, Western ideology that governs social views and attitudes. Originally, it aimed to provide learning environments that catered for diverse learners coming from a variety of cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Lemmer, Meier and van Wyk, 2006). Linked to this is Freire’s call for a shift from traditional ‘banking’ education towards an education that is relevant to learners and encompasses the many aspects of everyday life.

In South Africa there are numerous criticisms of multicultural education. It has the tendency to stereotype groups (Soudien, Carrim and Sayed, 2004) by essentialising culture and singular group identity, while accepting whiteness as the dominant culture and the perceived norm (Howard, 1999, McLaren, 1994, Francis and Hemson, 2007a). Morrow criticises multiculturalism as a “permanent recognition of difference as a ground for special treatment” (2007, 160), which persists in maintaining difference. Moletsane et al. (2004) also point out that multiculturalism

fails to analyse systems of power, which, along with the colour-blind discourse, allows white students and teachers to “deflect challenges to their own positions of privilege” (Kandaswamy, 2007, 13), by claiming equality and not challenging traditional hierarchies.

Vandeyar (2003) argues that current multicultural education provides only a veneer of change, and does not address deep-seated racism.¹ It is also often seen as being more concerned with social control than with social change, and can reify, fragment and homogenise culture (Rezai-Rashti, 1995). It has been used as an excuse for entrenching stereotypes under the auspices of demonstrating culture (Francis and Hemson, 2007a). This does not take into account all other factors of identity and can set western whiteness apart from the ‘other’ (Jansen, 2009a).

Much educational literature and research in South Africa focuses on multicultural education. Although this may be a useful guideline for many teachers with little exposure to multicultural classrooms, the approach often endorses assimilationist and colour-blind approaches. Carrim writes that “far from being a positive acknowledgement of ‘difference’, the multicultural trends in schools seem to be reconstructed forms of racism itself” (1998, 312). In order to understand the approach undertaken in this research, it is important to unpack the assimilationist, contributionist, and colour-blind approaches, along with the presence of ‘whiteness’ in education.

3.2.1 Assimilationist approach

Various researchers have found that desegregated schools in South Africa are adopting an ‘assimilationist approach’ towards education (Carrim, 1998, Jansen, 1998, Moletsane et al. 2004, Naidoo, 1996, Soudien, 2004, Vandeyar, 2003), which does not fully address the need for deep integration. Assimilation has been criticised for not recognizing and honouring racial, cultural and ethnic identities (Carrim, 1998). The approach requires that students adopt the dominant culture and language of the school, irrespective of their own cultural or linguistic background, in a ‘majority rules’ mindset. Thus the views, traditions and values of the dominant group are reflected as the cultural context of the school (Soudien, 2004). This has a negative impact on

¹ Vandeyar’s research aimed to learn lessons from other countries’ methods of managing diverse populations. While this may be useful, we must be wary of applying it too generally to the South African context. Because of our unique circumstances we must forge our own policy and methods of culture- and race-inclusive education.

subordinate groups, who are expected to give up or sublimate their own cultures and traditions, and by implication, acknowledge the superiority of the dominant groups (Soudien, 2004). Individual identities are formed in the context of collective cultures (Mead, 1992), so for an educational system to ignore those collective cultures is to undermine the individual, and his or her beliefs and values (Morrow, 2007). Schools that employ the assimilationist approach view the culture and traditions of the teachers and principals as the ideal standard for functionality (Vally and Dalamba, 1999, Soudien and Sayed, 2003). This *standard* however, is still predominantly white and English or Afrikaans in most 'mixed' schools.

3.2.2 Contributionist approach

The contributionist approach is another form of multicultural education, which 'celebrates' or identifies particular cultural differences among learners, in an attempt to demonstrate diversity. Moletsane et al. (2004) write that this is the most common approach toward 'integration' in desegregated schools. This however "does not acknowledge that there could be differences within the perceived 'racial' or 'cultural' groups, and that the identity and culture of individuals and groups are temporal and changing" (Vally and Dalamba, 1999, 35). In these instances, race is often viewed as a culture, with little acknowledgement that there are a variety of cultures within races. Through the celebratory aspect of multicultural education, the actual basis of inequalities and the socially constructed nature of racism does not receive attention. Instead, these practices construct artificial notions of difference between 'ethnic' groups (Carrim, 1998).

3.2.3 Colour-blind approach

The 'colour-blind' approach (Omi and Wynant, 1994, Frankenberg, 1993, Jansen, 1998, Vandeyar and Killen, 2006), is often an easy way out of dealing with diversity. This approach tends to ignore or evade the influence that colour, culture and power bring to the classroom in an attempt to imagine equality in schools. Teachers avoid acknowledgment of different historical, economic, political and social backgrounds, which tends to perpetuate the privileges and enforce the rules of the dominant culture. There is a lack of recognition that privilege was enforced by law, and that ignoring or evading this will not 'undo' the wrongs of the past. Eyber (1997) writes that colour-blindness provides a justification for current educational practices, by assuming that if race is not 'seen', racism is not present.

Frankenberg (1993) points out that those who are 'colour-blind' in terms of the discourse used here neither suffer from the physical characteristic of 'colour-blindness', nor are actually 'blind' when it comes to 'seeing' race: instead they *evade* the complex effects of privilege and difference that colour and power exert on learners in classrooms. Clayton (2003) argues that this approach does learners a disservice because it is too simplistic.

Within this 'race-neutral' orientation (Lea, 2006), teachers also refuse to recognise learners' "membership in a racial or cultural group as well as the possibility of painful episodes of discrimination" (Rezai-Rashti, 1995, 12). This assumes that race should not, and does not matter. Colour-blindness is an escape from the reality of difference in our multicultural society. What is more, it creates an indifferent attitude toward important cultural differences between learners at school. Soudien (2004) also found that many teachers use the colour-blind approach in an attempt to shield their learners from difficult racial situations, not trusting them to confront and deconstruct the realities of inequality.

The colour-blind approach was initially viewed as a positive shift away from past discourses of race essentialism through the belief in biological and scientific differences (Omi and Wynant, 1994). It also stems from the assimilationist viewpoint, where similarity and adaptation to a single American (read *white*) culture is seen as ideal (Frankenberg, 1993). The concept involves moving towards a discourse of *sameness*, in order to "achieve an illusory state of equality" (Lea, 2006, 60), and attempts to demonstrate a state of freedom from prejudice and political correctness. This however, avoids the recognition that race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation (Omi and Wynant, 1994), and whiteness is an ideological system of power which works in insidious and often invisible ways. A colour-blind stance perpetuates the "paradigm of thought by which children [and adults] are taught not to see what they see; by which blacks are reassured that there is no real inequality in the world, just their own bad dreams" (Williams, 1991, 13).

3.2.4 *Colour-blindness and whiteness*

Closely linked to colour-blindness is the refusal to acknowledge whiteness as a race. The discourses of colour-blindness and otherness perpetuate through an evasion of the recognition of power that white teachers hold (Frankenberg, 1993). These discourses reinforce white

privilege and power, and deflect challenges to these positions. Urrieta writes that the colour-blind 'policy' protects whiteness through denying the "historical and current context of white domination" (2006, 456). "As long as we continue to advocate for colorblind educational policies in a white supremacist system, we will continue to promote unequal treatment of people of colour in ...schools" (*ibid*, 472).

In this case, whiteness is viewed as the invisible norm, and teachers fail to unpack the systems of colour privilege and domination that lie within this belief, along with their own assumptions about other racial groups. Racial 'others' are placed as apart from the western self that is viewed as normal and race-less. Tatum adds that whites "usually think of racism as the prejudiced behaviors of individuals rather than as an institutionalized system of advantage" (1997, 95). Thus their ideas and attitudes are – often unintentionally – projected onto learners in terms of equality and similarity, of privilege, economic resources, social networks and historical background.

Soudien (2007b) believes there is a tendency of many former Model C or 'privileged' schools to dismiss the importance of open racial discourse in their racially 'integrated' schools. He cites the then headmaster of a racially mixed school, who said that they keep saying they don't want to talk about race, but they keep being asked to talk about it. The refusal to acknowledge whiteness as a race has very negative consequences for learners of all colours, with regards to the recognition of identities and privilege. hooks comments that whites think that "a universal subjectivity (we are all just people) ...will make racism disappear. They have a deep emotional investment in the myth of 'sameness', even as their actions reflect the primacy of whiteness" (1992, 167). Being white has benefits far beyond the school environment, including "access to networks and economic resources" (Urrieta, 2006, 472) that people of colour may not have in South Africa. Urrieta (*ibid*) points out that the continuing effects of race-based separation and segregation are now referred to as a result of *choice*, and not as the continuing repercussions of a colour-essentialised past.

Whiteness is *performed* and *produced* by teachers projecting their own assumptions and beliefs onto learners (Frankenberg, 1997). The failure of teachers to examine their own whiteness provides a base for misunderstandings and assumptions of power, which, if not challenged, can be passed on to learners of all colours. Learners need to be encouraged to "analyze the conditions that

have disabled others to speak where those who have power exercise authority” (Giroux, 1992, 33). Currently, whiteness is naturalised as a cultural marker to define ‘otherness’. What is required therefore is a shift away from understanding ethnicity as ‘other than white’ (McLaren, 1994). It is imperative that whiteness is viewed as a racial identity in order to educate learners about race. Tatum (1997) recommends racial cognisance and open discourse with learners in order to de-stigmatise race, while encouraging learners to critically deconstruct the dominance of whiteness in learning institutions.

3.3 Anti-racist education

In a reaction to multicultural education, some theorists and educators propose an anti-racist approach. This criticises the educational system for functioning in the best interests of the racially dominant group. It proposes that “issues of equality and justice need to be visible in both the formal, or taught, and informal curriculum” (Eyber, Dyer, and Versfeld, 1997, 53). It is an ‘action-orientated’ strategy to address racism and social oppression, which opposes racism, stereotypes and attitudes (Vandeyar and Killen, 2006). Anti-racist education therefore attempts to focus on the histories and practices that racial prejudice supports, and examines the institutions from which racism originates. It proposes an examination of the political and social structures which produce stereotypes, and sees minority students’ educational failure as a direct result of institutionalised racism within the classroom (Rezai-Rashti, 1995).

Anti-racist education attempts to identify and emphasise *discrimination*, and not *differences* between people (Dornbrack, 2008). Although this encourages an ethic of respect for others and an understanding of the origins and effects of racism, it has been criticised for essentialising race, and ignoring non-racial causes of difference, power and prejudice (Moletsane et al. 2004). This may be detrimental in terms of offering a one-sided viewpoint, and may lead to a culture of acceptance of racial inequalities. Black South African schools in particular require a more contextual analysis than anti-racist education (*ibid*). *This needs to* take into account other factors of diversity that do not necessarily relate to white privilege.

Carrim (1998), and Carrim and Soudien (1999) therefore endorse a ‘critical anti-racist perspective’. This moves beyond the ‘black-white’ dualism, and attempts to take into account

other categories such as gender and class, with the recognition that there are racist tendencies within all groups (Carrim, 1998). It aims to 'de-essentialise' identities, by acknowledging and incorporating 'the notion of 'difference' within and among people" (*ibid*, 318), through structured programmes and interventions. But, as Carrim points out, there *are* no programmes to "help teachers cope with multiracial/ cultural/ lingual/ ability classrooms" (1998, 318).

3.4 The research in perspective: Critical Multiculturalism

Many writers (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, McLaren, 1995, Nieto 2008, Sleeter 1996, Shor, 1992) encourage a critical pedagogy, which is "designed to facilitate a 'critical interrogation' of students' constructions of their own and others' identities and processes of socialization" (Ravitch, 2005, 2). Teachers who encourage this manage to interrogate the self and the 'other' in their similar *and* different forms (Kanpol, 1995), in order to provide a more culturally sensitive and inclusive education. Ideally, teachers need to focus "on 'structural' oppression in the forms of patriarchy, capitalism and white supremacy" (McLaren, 1994, 59) as a means to teach for empowerment and change.

Critical multiculturalism links discourses of race, culture, language, and gender issues to structural inequalities in societies (Hemson, 2006), and views them as social constructions that are the production of greater social and historical struggles. Within a critical position, the concepts of equity and equality need to be examined. Attempts to ignore difference and claim equality may encourage the use of stereotypes and entrench racial viewpoints inherited from parents. This aligns with the assimilation approach. When teachers claim equality amongst all learners, efforts to teach for social justice and democratic participation can be undermined (Francis and Muthukrishna, 2004). In keeping with the aims of critical pedagogy, teachers and learners thus need to be led to a common understanding of social injustice and oppression, and find ways to confront the structures that enforce these.

Steyn (2007a) developed the concept of 'Diversity Literacy', which moves away from the 'master, or founding narratives' (Giroux, 1998, Steyn, 2001, 2007b) of society that reinforce hegemonic orders such as racism and sexism. Teachers aware of these narratives are able to analyse their

significance and influence on learners and schools, and encourage a criticism and reflection of the relations of power and its effects on non-dominant cultures.

Emerging from our deeply embedded socio-political and historical position in South Africa is a unique set of factors. These can only be addressed by developing policies and frameworks which are specific to our needs and particular context. This includes the examination of power, and an encouragement of border crossings (Giroux, 1988, McLaren, 1993), as a way to teach for social justice. These will now be discussed.

3.4.1 Analysis of Power

Foucault writes that analysis “should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is in its most regional and local forms and institutions” (1989, 179). This emphasises that the power that teachers exert over learners may be overlooked when examining educational institutions as a whole.

Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke and Curran (2004) point out that schools often reflect and perpetuate the practices of the larger society, where difference is not recognized. Certain teaching and assessment methods can thus privilege some learners and put others at a disadvantage. “Teachers are in a position of power to decide which discourses are regarded as legitimate, and which are excluded” (Grant and Sachs, 1995, 94).

Research has found that schools and teachers are not engaging with relations of power (Francis and Muthukrishna, 2004). Teachers perpetuate oppressive practices at school, which serve as ‘socializing instruments’ (Giroux, 1981). As a result, “patterns of inequity play themselves out in insidious and complex ways in schools” (Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna, 2004, 67). Teachers are situated in power systems at schools, and in turn exert those systems themselves through compliance with school policy and adherence to ethno-centric curricula. This places them in a paradoxical position: that of perpetuating the dominant culture to earn a living, versus providing students with alternative discourses that may be at odds with the school and social milieu (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993).

Consequently, McLaren (1994) encourages teachers to “interrogate the discursive presuppositions that inform their curriculum practices with respect to race, class, gender and sexual orientation” (64). Matthews (2005) also suggests sharing pedagogic authority between teacher and learner, which includes discussing the syllabus with students, along with how they will be assessed. Likewise, Stern (1998) recommends making education relevant to the learners. She found that students responded positively to the joint creation of the curriculum and the sharing of power, which also had the effect of increasing a sense of control over other factors in their personal lives. An important factor in a critical multicultural approach would therefore be the adjustment of traditional methods of assessment, along with training to assist accommodation to change. In order to change attitudes *and* behaviour, teachers need tools to “draw attention to how diversity is caught up in relations of power” (Francis and Hemson, 2007a, 47).

3.4.2 Border crossings

Critical multicultural education can be linked to the concept of ‘border identities and pedagogies’, as discussed by Giroux (1988), McLaren (1993) and Jansen (2009a). Border identities are those identities that create unity through difference, and involve forming interrelationships between different cultures (Giroux, 1995). This involves learners being provided with opportunities to construct new cultural meanings and understanding (McLaren, 1994). What border pedagogy suggests is a ‘crossing’ of bridges between cultures and identities, in a situation of constructive translation and dialogue. Border narratives involve re-authoring “the discourses of oppression in politically subversive ways” (McLaren, 1994, 62).

Chambers also recognises the need for “differences [to be] recognized, exchanged and mixed in identities that break down but are not lost, that connect but remain diverse” (1990, 114). Border pedagogy acknowledges “the shifting borders that both undermine and re-territorialize different configurations of culture, power, and knowledge” (Giroux, 1992, 28) within education, and challenges the existing boundaries of knowledge while creating new ones. “A border identity is not simply an identity that is anticapitalist and counter-hegemonic but is also critically utopian, it is an identity that transforms the burden of knowledge into a scandal of hope” (McLaren, 1995, 59). Ideally, teachers should provide opportunities *for* border crossings, and encourage a

recognition of “similarities and solidarity” (Kanpol, 1995, 178) among and between a remarkable set of diverse learners.

Jansen (2009d) proposes that teachers should address their own ‘brokenness’, before being able to encourage border crossings among others. “The teacher is implicated within the social and pedagogical narrative... the teachers are themselves carriers of troubled knowledge” (Jansen, 2009a, 258). Teachers therefore need to be encouraged to acknowledge their own ‘daemons’, and thus open up the possibilities for personal transformation in the classroom (Jansen, 2009a). This provides great opportunities for crossing borders and bridges towards empowered teaching and learning.

3.4.3 Teaching for Social Justice

McLaren writes that “justice needs to be continually created and continually struggled for” (1995, 44). Amongst others, Greene (1998), McLaren (1995), and Young (1998) thus propose ‘teaching for social justice’, which encourages teachers to promote a just and equitable society, and learners to explore possibilities for change. The social justice approach challenges dominant ideologies and power structures, as well as the knowledge systems that are controlling the education system. Teaching for social justice involves viewing factors of identity through structures of social groups and oppression (Francis and Hemson, 2007b). It aims to transform schools to become institutions which help children develop their own freedom and their ability to govern themselves (Young, 1998). “To teach for social justice is to teach for enhanced perception and imaginative explorings, for the recognition of social wrongs, of sufferings, of pestilences wherever and whenever they arise” (Greene, 1998, xlv).

Aronowitz and Giroux remind us that “many students grow up within the boundaries of a class culture, popular culture, and a school culture” (1993, 128), which is the terrain in which learners develop a voice. Teachers influence this voice, and thus need to encourage critical thinking. Being in positions of power, teachers are also agents of their learners’ futures, and it is important that they are able to pass on a ‘sense of agency’ (Ayers, Hunt and Quinn, 1998). Thus, in order to provide appropriate interventions teachers and schools would have to affirm the “culture, language and identity of previously marginalized learners and... regard them as a source to

enrich the critical pedagogical situation within multicultural contexts” (Chetty, 1997, 1). Within this, issues of diversity need to be located within an equity and human rights perspective (Moletsane et al. 2004). These authors call for a framework that deconstructs concepts of “oppression, inclusion and exclusion in relation to how relevant they are in addressing questions of equity, equality and social justice, and human rights” (*ibid*, 67).

3.5 Diversity training

Although this research does not focus specifically on student teachers, it is important to include the relevance of diversity training before they enter a teaching environment. As Marx said, “the educator should also be educated” (Freire, 1985, 105). Meier writes that “the desegregation process in schools has intensified the need for all teachers to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will equip them to work effectively with all children” (2005, 172). South African student teachers, however, are not sufficiently trained to understand and deal with diverse classrooms, and for the most part have no previous exposure to what is perceived as diversity (Nkomo, McKinney and Chisholm, 2004).

Carrim (1995), Hemson (2006), Orfield (2004), and Vally and Dalamba (1999) all endorse the crucial need for training and empowerment of teachers working in diverse schools. Hemson (2006) and Nkomo and Vandeyar (2008) found that diversity training would make a ‘considerable difference’ to teachers in their desegregated classrooms, as it positively influences the ability to teach multicultural classes. Hemson (2006) observed that teachers are not sufficiently prepared because pre-service institutions are still segregated and non-inclusive². Many education programmes also focus on gender and disability rather than race (Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna, 2004), possibly because it is uncomfortable and hard to deal with. Sadly, programmes are also hindered by a lack of resources and insufficient support for teacher development (Francis and Muthukrishna, 2004).

² This is because staff demographics have not ‘desegregated’, staff are not familiar with debates about diversity, there is a lack of learning material that addresses diversity, and external policy changes are not being realised internally.

Teachers therefore enter the classrooms with “preconceived notions... and misconceptions” (Parameswaran, 2007, 51) about what multiculturalism actually involves. This produces both positive and negative implications for teaching in a multicultural classroom, as stereotypes and expectations of various groups of learners can harm or hinder other learners in their progress. It must be remembered that cultures are neither static, nor absolute. They are constantly evolving and overlapping, and the construction of culture and identity is a lifelong process (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke and Curran, 2004). Thus pre-service ‘cultural training’ will not provide answers to all problems, and experience will play almost as great a role. The late Julius Nyerere of Tanzania highlighted the importance of this through his call for life-long learning and education for self reliance. Ladson-Billings (1995) and Meier (2005) suggest that student teachers should be placed in teaching situations of diverse learner populations for extended periods of time. However, it must be cautioned that if skills are not provided before placement, stigmas and prejudices may only be perpetuated, and not challenged or changed. Paccione (2000) warns that cultural immersion may even be traumatic, and must be carried out carefully and sensitively, in various stages of development.

In order to tackle diversity issues at schools, teacher education is imperative (Wasonga and Piveral, 2004). A broad range of diversity issues need to be addressed, including race, class, gender, HIV status, sexuality, religion, language, and disability (Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna, 2004). These authors recommend that teacher education programmes integrate debates on oppression and social exclusion in order to encourage a ‘human rights’ or social justice approach towards teaching. This would examine the relationships and intersections between all forms of difference in schools, within the context of shifting power relations. It is important to recognise that “issues of diversity are at the heart of educational theory and practice, and ...curriculum processes [should] sustain this recognition” (Hemson, 2006, 48).

There is also a need for teacher education programmes to provide the space for student teachers to explore their own values and attitudes towards diversity, and the ways in which these attitudes may affect their teaching. While this may be time consuming and a distraction from formal ‘teacher training’, it is essential for pre-service teachers to reflect on their personal knowledge, attitudes and values, in order to understand how to interact with – and teach – those different from themselves. However, le Roux and Möller (2002) remind us, that in South Africa teachers

are currently so pressurised, and have so little multicultural training, that this self-reflexivity and exploration is hard to achieve. Many classes are so overcrowded and schools so understaffed, that it is impossible for teachers to know, understand and respond to the respective backgrounds of all their learners.

3.6 Conclusion

Education is that terrain where power and politics are given a fundamental expression, since it is where meaning, desire, language, and values engage and respond to the deeper beliefs about the very nature of what it means to be human. (Giroux, 1985, xiii)

This chapter examined different approaches to multicultural education and the possibilities and opportunities for alternative methodologies. Integration in schools is a diverse and challenging terrain, one which affects the beliefs and values of learners at many levels. The way teachers deal with integration and change has serious and long lasting implications for learning; at academic, social and moral levels. Many schools and teachers adopt assimilationist, contributionist and colour-blind methods in attempting to deal with diversity and integration. These have negative consequences for learners, such as the stereotyping and essentialising of race, language and culture.

A critical multicultural stance towards education has been discussed and promoted. In this approach, teachers are cultural workers (Giroux, 1992, McLaren, 1993), who encourage learners to cross borders and form new relationships between races, cultures and other perceived differences. The literature suggests that the examination of whiteness plays an important role in critical teaching. Accepted ideologies such as whiteness and masculinity need to be challenged and explored as part of teacher training. The examination of power also plays an important role in critical education.

Stemming from Freire's (1970) goals for education, what is needed is a 'conscientization'; that is, a heightened social awareness in working toward social action and social change. Jansen (2009a) refers to this as teaching to disrupt. This involves a recognition that ideology includes "the way in which discourse and discursive systems generate particular social relations as well as reflect them" (McLaren, 1994, 62). Included in a conscientization is an examination of whiteness and

colour-blind discourses, which “possess the power to nominate others as deviant or normal” (McLaren, 1994, 64). Conscientization also entails an examination by teachers of their own histories and cultures, in order to engage with learners and open up possibilities for transformation in the classroom (Jansen, 2009a). There is thus an urgent need for diversity training to be endorsed and encouraged. The following chapters focus on an exploration of the discourses arising from teachers dealing with integration and change.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Context

This thesis focuses on discourses arising from teaching in diverse classrooms and desegregated schools in Cape Town. Certain papers were particularly influential in this research. These included Moletsane, Hemson and Mutukrishna's (2004) examination of teacher education and preparation for changing school contexts, and Nkomo and Vandeyar's (2008) work, which aimed to discover teachers' 'best practice' through deep qualitative and quantitative research. Eyber's (1997) research on the 'rhetorics of transformation' was very helpful and Frankenberg's (1993) discursive perspectives on race were significant in shaping the analysis.

4.1.1 Note on the use of racial categories

South Africa is unfortunately still trapped in apartheid terminology of 'race'. The Department of Education (DoE) continues to classify all learners by race, these being: White, African/black, Coloured, Indian/Asian, other. We are still bound by a mindset of classification and stereotyping, which Jansen considers to be a demeaning form of racism (2009b). While acknowledging Soudien's claim that race "becomes the almost unchallenged lens through which South African difference is understood" (2004, 110), it was the only criterion available through which 'desegregated' schools could be selected for the sample, and was one of the key factors underpinning the analysis. Although race, gender, and social class are social constructs, their classifications in this research are necessary, as they have very real implications for identity and education in terms of the social power and privilege ascribed to them (Given, 2008). Like Francis and Muthukrishna (2004), I do not want to create the illusion that by eliminating the use of racial terms, one eliminates racism. Through this constructed 'realness' I also chose not to frame each 'race' in quotation marks. I chose to use the term 'black' and not 'African', as the latter, in my mind, includes many 'races' in Africa. This applies to the use of 'white' and not 'European' too.

4.1.2 Note on gender

There are many factors or ‘realities’ that shape identity and difference. The dominant factors include race, class, gender, language, religion, sexuality and culture. In his paper, Soudien chooses to focus selectively on race and class as the main analytic factors, in a “dominant factor model” (2004, 92). While I do not consciously choose a ‘dominant factor model’, I cannot claim the opposite of that – a “contingent model” (*ibid.* 92) – which aims to include as many factors as possible within the context. I was constrained by what Soudien calls “the dominant languages of description that exist within our social repertoires” (2004, 110).

I have therefore chosen to focus largely on race, class, and language as factors of diversity, and have not included gender as one of these. There are a few reasons for this; the first being that the interview schedule did not explore gender deeply enough to analyse teachers’ discourses towards gender differences. Secondly, teachers did not volunteer gender information – perhaps because it is not a ‘recent’ feature of integration, or perhaps because they are less conscious of it. Lastly, the Education Department’s criteria for identifying ‘desegregation’ focuses almost entirely on race, which guided the selection of schools. Therefore, if gender were to be included, a further, deeper study would have to be undertaken.

4.2 Research approach

Qualitative research (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was employed in this study, which involved interviews with teachers in the Cape Town area. The data obtained is embedded in teachers’ own framing of their teaching and classroom experiences, and thus is not quantified. Using a critical multicultural perspective, the research attempts to gain a view of the participants’ reality (Miles and Huberman, 1994) by setting out to understand their “interpretations of the world around them” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, 23). This ‘reality’ is socially constructed and constantly changing (Morse and Richards, 2002). The study involved a derivative, data-driven design, to reveal core concepts from the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This research was chosen because of the relative paucity of research on teachers’ perspectives and discourses surrounding diversity.

4.3 Data collection and sample selection

4.3.1 Interviews

This research employed semi-structured in-depth interviews (Wisker, 2001) with twenty three teachers from a range of racially desegregated schools in the Cape Town Metropole. Interviews as a method were chosen to give an insight into people's experiences (Silverman, 1997). All the interviews were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. The process of transcription is understood to already be a form of analysis, as it is a reading imposed on what is heard (Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

The interview questions were adapted from the schedule of the original iNCUDISA research project. The questions were designed to ensure flexibility in the interview process, allowing teachers to express themselves openly and encouraging them to offer their own narratives.

Topics covered in the interviews included:

- Challenges experienced with diverse learners
- Experiences of multicultural classrooms
- Pre-service diversity training
- Past injustice and current teaching methods
- Staff demographics.

The interview schedule can be found in Appendix One.

4.3.2 Schools

The schools were selected using purposive sampling (Trochim, 2006). Having received permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), the 2006 database of school demographic data was utilised. (See Appendix Two for the permission letter). Racially 'mixed' or 'desegregated' schools were intentionally selected. This meant that only schools from Metropole North, Central and South were contacted, because schools in the East are attended predominantly by black learners, and to date they have not experienced major movement of different races into their schools. This is a reflection of what Vandeyar and Jansen (2008) refer to as a one way migration from black to white schools.

Access to the schools was negotiated by making personal contact with and visiting the principals. They were given information letters to read, which were discussed. If they agreed to participate, they asked one or two of their teachers to volunteer to be interviewed. See Appendix Three for the information letter.

Within all the chosen schools, there was still a dominant race group, reflecting the legacy of past racial divisions. The schools were equally integrated with regards to gender, except two schools that were single sex. The schools varied with regard to their socio-economic status, often relating to geographic location. This was again as a reflection of apartheid policies. The sample was also a convenience one (Trochim, 2006), as the research depended on principals allowing their staff to participate in the research, and on teachers volunteering.

The school data was as follows:

- There were five schools from Metropole North, four from Metropole Central, and six from Metropole South.
- Seven were primary schools and eight were secondary schools.
- Eight schools were predominantly coloured (former House of Representatives), one was predominantly Indian (former House of Delegates), and six were predominantly white (former House of Assembly).
- No formal data was obtained about socio-economic status of the schools, but from personal observation, and within government school limits, four schools were categorised in a high economic bracket, five in a medium bracket, and six schools in a low economic bracket. No school in the sample was as poor or under-resourced as many 'township' or rural schools in South Africa, but many were still sorely deprived.

Table One tabulates school data.

Table One: School Data

SCHOOL CODE	AREA	LEVEL	PREDOMINANT RACE GROUP & FORMER DEPARTMENT	MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION	SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (personal judgement)
S2	Met central	Primary	Coloured (HoR)	English & Afrikaans	High
S3	Met central	Primary	Coloured (HoR)	English & Afrikaans	Low
S1	Met central	Secondary	Coloured (HoR)	English	Low
S5	Met central	Secondary	White (HoA)	English	High
S11	Met north	Primary	White (HoA)	English & Afrikaans	Medium
S9	Met north	Primary	Coloured (HoR)	English & Afrikaans	Medium
S8	Met north	Secondary	Coloured (HoR)	English	Medium
S10	Met north	Secondary	Coloured/Indian (HoD)	English & Afrikaans	Low
S12	Met north	Secondary	White (HoA)	Afrikaans	Medium
S16	Met south	Primary	Coloured (HoR)	English	Low
S17	Met south	Primary	Coloured (HoR)	English	Low
S18	Met south	Primary	Coloured (HoR)	English	Low
S19	Met south	Secondary	White (HoA)	English	High
S14	Met south	Secondary	White (HoA)	English & Afrikaans	Medium
S15	Met south	Secondary	White (HoA)	English	High

4.3.3 Teachers

Participants were contacted to arrange a convenient time and place for their interview. Each teacher gave permission to be recorded, and anonymity was assured. The interviews were conducted in places chosen by the teachers, either in their classrooms or homes. Due to the voluntary nature of the interview process, it was not always possible to ensure demographic representation of respondents.

The teacher data was as follows:

- Fourteen teachers were women and nine were men.
- Ages of teachers ranged from early twenties to mid sixties.
- There were eleven white teachers, nine coloured, two Indian, and one black teacher.

It is unfortunate that there were not more black respondents, but this reflects the majority white staff profile in most desegregated schools (Nkomo and Vandeyar, 2008). Even so, the strong voice of the only black respondent proved to be particularly insightful. Table Two tabulates teacher data. See Appendix Four for graphs representing teacher demographics.

Table Two: Teacher Demographics

PSEUDONYM AND GENDER	RACE	AGE BRACKET
Miss Oosthuizen	White	20-29
Mrs Mullins	White	50-59
Miss Foche	White	20-29
Mrs Haywood	White	60-69
Mrs Stevens	White	30-39
Miss Botha	White	20-29
Mrs April	Coloured	40-49
Mrs Pyoos	Coloured	60-69
Mrs Booysen	Coloured	30-39
Miss Tucker	Coloured	20-29
Mrs Gous	Coloured	30-39
Miss Warren	Coloured	30-39
Mrs Patel	Indian	40-49
Mrs Naidoo	Indian	50-59
Mr Sogoni	Black	30-39
Mr Pienaar	White	40-49
Mr McDonald	White	40-49
Mr van Jaarsveld	White	50-59
Mr Smit	White	20-29
Mr Parker	White	40-49
Mr Cornelius	Coloured	50-59
Mr Arends	Coloured	50-59
Mr Bonsma	Coloured	40-49

4.4 Ethical considerations

The respondents were informed of the purpose of the research, and confidentiality was assured. All participation was on a voluntary basis, and recorded verbal informed consent was achieved (Trochim, 2006). In order to ensure anonymity, each teacher was given a pseudonym, and each school a code.

4.5 Analysis

The first level of analysis involved reading the transcripts for basic themes and codes. The themes arose from the interview questions and common issues expressed by teachers. A total of sixteen themes emerged. The data was then read for 'codes', which were relevant issues for the thesis (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). This helped to organise the data and guide the focus. A total of twenty five codes were used. See Appendix Five for themes and codes. The second level of

analysis, or 'critical analysis' (Friere, 1985), consisted of intense reading and re-reading of the transcripts, in order to seek out conceptions of diversity and change that emerged from the teachers' narratives. Wetherell and Potter (1992) point out that this is important as factors such as identity, ideology and subjectivity are constituted through discursive practices. Discourse helps us to make meaning of the world around us. It assists us in defining what is understood as knowledge, and regulates social behaviour (Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

'Discourse Analysis' (Given, 2008, Gee, 2005, Wetherell and Potter, 1992) was thus employed as an analytical tool in the search for teachers' discursive constructions of diversity. It is "a critical perspective that is geared towards examining the subtle ways in which unequal power relations are maintained and reproduced through language use" (Given, 2008, 145). As Grant and Sachs (1995) point out, discourse analysis within multicultural education assists us to interrogate the integral relationship between knowledge and power, including the power that teachers hold in their ability to deny access to institutional structures. This approach assisted in establishing the degree to which teachers were actively encouraging discussions and interactions around issues of race, culture, gender, class, and power within their classrooms. According to Foucault (1989), discourse is not just talk, but the practices that determine the talk.

4.6 Scope and limitations

I acknowledge the limitations of this project and its dependence on reductionist strategies and racial classifications. The study would have been enhanced by participant observation, but it was limited by time, size and purpose. With a small pool of twenty three respondents, I do not quantify the data, and therefore focus on individual narratives that arose from particular interviews, as well as the emerging common themes. As a result I could only highlight factors that were relevant to the study, while being conscious that I could not use the data to make generalisations about all schools.

Guba and Lincoln emphasise the importance of trustworthiness and authenticity in representing research findings. That is, the degree to which the findings are credible and dependable, and have the capacity to "lead to improved understanding of the constructions of others, and to empower action" (1994, 114). It is hoped that this research represents as honestly as possible any

'knowledge' which comes to light in order to contribute to greater social justice within the education arena.

There were a few considerations that affected the data and results obtained, which require noting. The results may be skewed towards an increased interest and concern with diversity in education, because some of the teachers that volunteered were already interested in teaching 'multiculturally'. Only principals interested in the research responded to my request, and they may have purposely asked specific 'competent' teachers to volunteer. It must also be remembered that schools in the Western Cape, and specifically Cape Town, are known to be better resourced than rural schools (Phurutse, 2005), and thus the Cape Town area is not truly representative of the rest of South Africa. Thus any assumptions made may not apply to the rest of the country. Lastly, this project only focused on a limited number of respondents and cannot therefore make assumptions beyond the schools they represent.

I also need to emphasise that this thesis is not written from an educational perspective. The purpose was not to analyse educational methods but to examine teachers' viewpoints and discourses from a critical multicultural, sociological perspective. The research did not attempt to find solutions for problems teachers face, but set out to analyse and comment on the attitudes that emerge from the discourses and realities experienced and expressed by each teacher. I am also reminded by Soudien (2004) that any explanation of 'reality' will always be incomplete. We cannot claim 'truth', especially through the analysis of human discourses. Reality is primarily a socially constructed entity (Vandeyar, 2008), always subject to interpretations, and is constantly shifting and reinventing itself. I am thus aware that any 'realities' emerging from the study are only temporary, and relate solely to those who create them.

4.7 Self reflection

I acknowledge the inherent power imbalance in the research process. As the researcher I directed the line of questioning and decided which pieces of 'knowledge' to employ. The critical position I adopted is often biased towards challenging dominant hegemonies and traditional teaching methods, and my views may therefore have influenced those with whom I spoke. As Friere said, "it is impossible to escape the real world without critically assuming our presence in

it” (1985, 103). Thus I acknowledge my role in the analysis and my influence on the data collected. The research process was designed to encourage teachers to talk, even though I may not always have agreed with what they were saying. While I remained a neutral listener, it is important to acknowledge the position I occupy as a middle-class white woman, writing about social justice issues that largely affect working class, often black people. As guided by Sleeter and McLaren (1995), I wish to make use of my position of power to share this learning experience with others. I therefore intend producing a booklet for the participating teachers and schools sharing my basic findings and insights, also providing sources which may encourage change and transformation. The booklet would honour their participation in the research.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF DIFFERENCE

This chapter will examine the embedded discourses within teachers' narratives when dealing with difference and diversity. Issues of language, race, the past, equality, and tolerance arise through the discourses. This chapter validates what Eyber (1997) wrote: that culture and language are two ways in which the 'controlling of change' is justified, especially when denying the relevance of race. There is a notable missing presence of discourses of gender among the teachers' narratives.

5.1. Constructions of language

The subject of 'language' in teaching is complex, as it facilitates the conceptions of difference itself. As a cultural factor, however, it is also viewed *as* difference, and this affects teaching and integration. This section covers the challenges teachers face with regard to language differences, and the implications of the conception of language *as* difference. The desegregation of schools has foregrounded language as a category of difference. This results in discourses that situate the problem within the learners and parents, and not within the schools or teachers.

5.1.1 English-as-a-second language learners

In their multicultural classrooms, teachers report that they struggle increasingly with the different languages of their learners. This is mostly attributed to non-English speaking learners being sent to former 'Model C' and English medium schools; in the belief that previously white schools have a better standard of education than schools in the townships (Vandeyar and Jansen, 2008). Many ESL learners struggle academically because of language barriers, as language is the "gateway to cognition [and] contains knowledge codes that are crucial to learning" (Vandeyar and Killen, 2006, 391). Mrs Patel, who is an Indian English teacher, illustrates this by saying:

Some people somehow still have that old notion that: "Oh, if you send the child to an English medium school, the child is sure to progress", you know. But that is not so. They don't seem to realise that the child is struggling more at an English medium school.

Mr Bonsma honestly admitted that their school “does not really cater for the Xhosa learners” and so all learners have to get their instruction in English. “But, the parents... want their kids to speak English, and maybe that is an injustice to their kids”. Only three teachers mentioned that their schools have extra English support and teaching for learners whose first language is not English.

Consequently, both teachers and learners face challenges. Mr Pienaar stated that “It’s harmful to many children, if, if you are not very clever and you battle at school and now you still have to do it in English, it has got repercussions”. This demonstrates frustrations and problems in providing an inclusive education. Mrs Naidoo also stated very clearly that learners would “progress so so much better if they were able to express themselves, in isiXhosa for example”. She also said that teachers “really need support, and, it seems the teachers have to concentrate a lot on teaching language, maybe that’s why they are neglecting numeracy”. Other teachers also complained that they had to neglect subject matter because circumstances forced them to rather focus on language.

Sayed and Soudien found in their study that some black parents were determined to send their children to ‘English’ schools, but the learners’ competence was “invariably judged on his or her ability to write and read and speak English well” (2005, 123). This meant that most black learners did not do well. A dangerous implication of this can be the enforcement of stereotypical attitudes towards ‘learners of colour’, who may be viewed as being less academically capable than white learners. This often projects an image of “incompetence, illiteracy and ignorance, which is mistakenly regarded by some as indicative of inherent failings” (Fraser, 1995, 43). Miss Foche demonstrated this when she said:

With the weaker children, we’re mostly looking at the Xhosa children, it plays a big role, because you do get children there that just don’t achieve and just don’t develop their abilities. But I also understand parents that want to give other chances to their children. Because at the end, English is the language that most people in South Africa communicate and work in.

Miss Foche was very clear about who ‘the weaker children’ are, and why. This discourse downplays her role and responsibility as a foundation phase teacher in language education, and implicates the parents and learners in their responsibility to learn English. This provides yet another reason why it is imperative that these learners are given more support.

Many teachers therefore suggest that learners should be educated in their mother tongue for the first few years. This way learners can increase their basic academic grounding first, and only then focus on learning English. As Mrs Haywood said: “everybody *needs* to learn in their own language”. This is endorsed by many writers, including Ntshakala (1997), Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna (2004), and Mda (2004). As Vandeyar and Killen (2006) write, teaching learners in a second or third language disadvantages and disempowers them, as well as taking away their basic rights. It is, as with diversity training in all schools, a hard call to ask for, but learners deserve to be taught in their mother tongue, at least for the first few years of their schooling career. Although this argument is important, separating learners by language may serve to exclude them further, both from economic and social access. As a consequence, learning English later may also be more difficult. Ideally, therefore, teachers should be able to teach bilingually, but this places increased pressure on teachers and extra demands on time that they may not have.

5.1.2 Language as difference

“Language thus becomes an effective gatekeeper to academic progress and by extension, access to power and socio-economic status” (Vandeyar and Killen, 2006, 387). The resulting discourse is the construction of language *as* difference. Eyber writes that “the association between the black children and language ‘problems’ is pervasive and rests on the assumption that a lack of knowledge of English and Afrikaans is a problem” (1997, 92). According to the teachers interviewed, most teachers are not able to understand learners who do not speak English, and isiXhosa teachers are often called upon to intervene and translate. Often, as a result, teachers are locating language problems within the learners’ abilities and parental expectations, and not within the institutions and teachers themselves. This is confirmed by Eyber (1997) and Naidoo (1996). Naidoo (*ibid*) also found in his study that many teachers focused on the ‘deficiencies’ of black learners, including language problems, but did not examine their own approaches or the role of the institution as a whole. Miss Warren demonstrated this by saying that “it is difficult

and I can't speak Xhosa, I can't teach them in that language". It seems that it is left entirely up to learners (and parents) to learn another language. Eyber (1997) argues that culture and language are used as divisions to justify the controlling of change in schools, which reflects another complex aspect in the process of integration.

Mr McDonald also expected his learners to 'learn to cope' with English if they come to his school:

So for example, a boy from the township who comes in at Grade Eight and can't speak English properly is at a *huge* disadvantage. And until he has learnt to cope with the language in which he is being taught, it's actually unfair on him to expect him to achieve any kind of level of success, than any other boy will do.

It seems he is passing off responsibility for his learners by saying you can not 'expect' them to achieve until they learn English.

5.1.3 isiXhosa teachers as translators

One of the methods of dealing with a diversity of languages is to call upon black teachers to interpret for, explain to, or counsel learners from a different race or culture. Mrs Pyoos provided an example of this:

If you say for instance have, like, say the word black children in your class. And what are you going to do? You are going to use one of them. If there is no Xhosa teachers at your school, what are you going to do? But a neighbouring school, they have, ask one of their teachers to come into your classroom.

Mr McDonald also spoke confidently about their schools' 'use' of isiXhosa teachers:

Fortunately we have a number of teachers from different backgrounds as well, and they provide ...significant input in understanding why a boy may or may not have done a certain thing. So for example our two Xhosa teachers are quite helpful when it comes to understanding why a boy has done a certain thing, you know.

This strategy seems to avoid the problem, or pass it on to other teachers. It demonstrates an unwillingness to accept that teachers may have to learn isiXhosa. It also places additional strain on black teachers, and reinforces stereotyping and essentialising of racial and cultural groups.

These instances provide examples of what teachers do when they are not in a position to cope with diverse learners. It emphasises the clear need for diversity training and language education of teachers. It also demonstrates the burden carried by non-English speaking groups to translate and learn English, and implies a decreased responsibility of English speaking teachers and learners to learn other languages.

By contrast, two teachers *did* demonstrate a conceptualisation of language that located their own position and that of the school in the problem. The first was Mrs Booysen, a coloured woman, who provided a very heartening account of two isiXhosa speaking learners who could not speak English, in her English medium class. She took it upon herself to learn isiXhosa, so that she could communicate with these learners and help them to learn English. This proved to be a very positive influence on the learners which affected their academic achievement, increased social confidence and integration with other learners. In addition, other learners in the class started to learn isiXhosa as a third language.

Mrs Naidoo also started reading a tri-lingual book to her learners:

And I try to read, they have a good laugh the way I try! And I said, well, I'm trying! But, then suddenly I find that, children become alive, you know, they can identify something, you know, that's familiar with them from their surroundings.

Mrs Booysen said that learners become 'free' through speaking their own language. The terms 'alive' and 'free' really demonstrate the emancipation of learners through mother-tongue education and recognition of the value of home language. This encourages a sense of belonging and affirmation in learners that they may not experience in English-only education.

5.2 Constructions of race

It became obvious through the analysis that teachers possess a variety of discourses relating to 'race' or colour cognisance. This ranged from willing discussions about racial differences (critical racial cognisance), to claimed colour-blindness and perceived equality. Jansen (2009b) writes that persisting to use race as a division is 'playing with fire'. Unfortunately, however, the social construction of race remains a "primary point of reference" (Soudien, 1994a, 56), and there is still a difference in colour cognisance between races. As a result, teachers need to be continually conscious of the effects of 'race' on identity, behaviour and learning. There is a fine line between race essentialism, conscious racial cognisance (for the purpose of understanding learners' backgrounds), and the evasion of race (referred to as colour-blindness) (Frankenberg, 1993). Race essentialism often leads to indirect racism and race 'favouritism' within classes, but there was no direct evidence of this in the sample of teachers' discourses studied. Covert racism was also difficult to identify, but has been evidenced in other studies such as those of Vally and Dalamba (1999), Vandeyar and Killen (2006), and Vandeyar (2008).

5.2.1 *Colour-blind discourse*

There was a strong presence of a determined colour-blindness and insistence of equality across races in some of the teachers' narratives. In fact, twelve teachers could be classified as having adopted a colour-blind discourse. Here colour is deliberately avoided or denied as a factor influencing learner-teacher interactions. Many teachers seem to fall back on these discourses in order to manage difference. Vandeyar and Jansen write that this discourse "tends, in a superficial manner, to address equality but not equity" (2008, 11). When asked whether she thought teachers should highlight diversity, Miss Botha, a young white teacher, responded that "a child doesn't see colour or culture. They don't see it. To them you're the same as anyone else". Miss Warren also said that "because these children grow up together, they don't see the differences". Thus teachers avoid responsibility by clinging to the belief that because they are children, they do not 'see' colour, and therefore do not need to focus on it. This approach aims to view all learners as the 'same' in order to evade – or deny – racial differences and the imperative to take action.

Another example of this was Mr Pienaar's response. He said:

Really children don't see colour, and I can tell you we don't see colour, anymore either, those days are way, way, way in the past... It's really not an issue. We are very, very fortunate in this school, because we all see them as children.

Mr Pienaar appears to locate all acts of discrimination and potential racism in the 'past', in an attempt to close the doors on any association with racial recognition. On the surface, 'we all see them as children' *sounds* correct, but in reality it evades essential differences and qualities of learners. Grant and Sachs (1995) suggest that this approach may be a result of a critical lack of awareness or knowledge about cultural and racial influences. Orfield reinforces this when he says that teachers may revert to colour-blind discourses because they have "little knowledge and no training in cultural differences or in methods for reaching across lines of social division and producing positive classroom interactions" (2004, 96).

Miss Warren used a discourse informed by colour-blindness when she said:

I don't want to use colour... we don't look at religion... it's just a nine or ten year old, that's all I see... If you are a teacher you don't see colour you just see this little raw materials sitting in front of you.

It appears that Miss Warren is purposely evading cultural differences. This does not bode well for promoting a sense of pride in the learners with regard to their own cultures and belief systems. One cannot blame this teacher for her methods of teaching, but it is evident that she is evading a deep understanding of cultural and racial influences on the identities and behaviours of her learners. This does not encourage an understanding of past and present influences of oppression in its various racial, patriarchal, and capitalistic forms, and "does not address issues of power relations that play out at the very daily lives of our schools" (Vandeyar and Jansen, 2008, 11).

Some teachers reverted to clichés when talking about race. They did so by mentioning other abstract colours in their enumerations. These discourses were typified with phrases such as: "but

whether they are black, white, or pink or purple it doesn't really matter" (Mrs Haywood), "I don't care if you are black, green, pink South African, you know, it's not that relevant" (Miss Tucker), and, "their friends can be white, black or green for all they care, they are their best friends" (Miss Botha). Frankenberg refers to this as camouflaging "socially significant differences of colour in a welter of meaningless ones" (1993, 149). This type of discourse appears to be an attempt to hide or disguise difference among learners. The other possibility is that teachers try to over emphasise colour, in order to demonstrate a decreased meaning of colour and race.

This is contrasted with a statement by Mrs Mullins, who was clearly cognisant of race and aware of difference. Her listing of students' skin colour is pragmatic and acknowledges race and culture. She said: "there is very much a racial undercurrent in the classrooms. Your coloured children, Indian children, black children, white children".

Mrs Pyoos provided a rather humorous description of how race classifications are changing to cultural distinctions. She said:

We don't see no more colour. Well the colour is there, you see the colour, but you see the colour in cultures. ...We cannot, um, wither away from the colour. The colour still stays, but the culture is there. And that is how we must work today, with those children. And they are really nice children, if you look at them like that.

Declaring to not 'see' race eliminates the possibility of it being a divisive factor in integration. Other factors are used in its place – such as culture, class and language.

The claim to 'not see colour' is a controversial one, especially amongst teachers. In a historically racially divided country such as South Africa, it is unlikely that people do not notice race. Many people work hard at not letting race affect their behaviour, but this is different from what Frankenberg terms an "evasion" of colour (1993, 14). With such a history of entrenched race essentialism, it is doubtful that those who grew up under the segregated system have had a complete mind shift, as racial division "has become a habit of thought and experience" (Posel, 2001, 56).

5.2.2 Racial cognisance

The above section paints a rather bleak picture regarding colour-blindness and the evasion of differences. However, there were teachers interviewed in this study who were aware of the effects of racial issues that are present in schools today. In contrast to the belief that children do not see colour, some teachers pointed out that many children are still growing up amongst children of similar races, and therefore *do* notice difference at an 'integrated' school. Tatum (1997) writes that "the fact is that children as young as three do notice physical differences such as skin colour, hair texture and the shape of one's facial features" (32). This was confirmed by Eyber, Dyer, Versfeld et al. (1997).

Frankenberg writes of the importance of moving on from colour-blindness toward a positive recognition of difference. This 'racial cognisance' refers to the "autonomy of culture, values [and] aesthetic standards" (1993, 14). The approach differs from the original acknowledgement and essentialising of race through the belief that race is not biological but a construct shaped by political and social beliefs. Racial cognisance recognises the ways in which race interacts with other constructs such as religion, culture, and socio-economic status, to determine the realities of identity and experience. Vally and Dalamba write that it is imperative that issues such as racism in schools is "acknowledged and confronted" (1999, 5). Teachers, in particular, have an important role to play in challenging the social constructions of race that have ruled our thinking for so long.

Mr Sogoni, a black teacher, provided inspiring examples of recognition to the continued presence of racial differences and the effects this still has on learners. The following extended quotation demonstrates his colour cognisance and awareness of race through which he encourages a new way of understanding difference. He said:

Now those are things that are important to me. And I will tease my kids about these things, because I want them to be aware, number one, about the fact that we are different, make no mistake, they laugh at it when I talk about, the differences we find within the racial groups, and we talk about a flat nose that you find with black people, we talk about the skin, talk about the hair, and be *open* about those things. The more you try and avoid situations with kids; they are going to see through you... But once you start to talk about things, you explain

to them, they have a way now of understanding the basics of those things, because now you know, ah that's why we are different, ah, that's why it is like that. And now they have a way of even responding to any person, who will have a problem with it, because they are open about these things.

Mrs Booysen, who is a coloured woman in her thirties, was also aware of the realities of race, and opened her discussion with the problems she faced in a previously 'coloured school', between black and coloured learners. She spoke very honestly about: "The one culture, and then the other, two races fighting against each other... the coloureds were fighting with the Africans". These words display a great willingness to be open to racial differences and the potential for problems between them, which was not common in the discourses of other teachers.

An honest cognisance of the impact of racial inequalities encourages a constructive discussion of racial issues with learners. Through this openness, racially cognisant teachers are able to follow up the problems faced by learners, and discuss them in productive and proactive ways. Bartolome and Macedo (1997) emphasise how important it is to analyse race within the context of gender and ethnicity, rather than viewing each of them as singular entities. Miss Tucker, who is a young coloured teacher, displays an acute awareness of this, and of how her learners are influenced by the effects of dominant hegemonies. For example, she said that:

Especially things that have to do with, um, even gender and religion and things like that, they are all intertwined with race and culture. And so those kind of things vary across race and culture groups. Um, so that's pretty interesting to learn about as well.

5.3 Constructions of the past

Crucial in critical education is a recognition and discussion of South Africa's deeply divisive past, and how it still influences schools, teachers and learners today.³ This includes an understanding of the need to redress past legacies through programmes such as affirmative action and the

³ Throughout discussions with teachers, the apartheid era is loosely referred to as 'the past'. It was my feeling that the word 'apartheid' carries with it so many connotations and negative emotions that the use of the word 'past' is more gentle, and 'easier', and could be interpreted in a way each respondent felt comfortable.

Employment Equity Act⁴. Although this has been more visible in business, it is also important in education, and has a considerable role to play for the provision of role models and like-cultured teachers in integrated schools.⁵

5.3.1 Past 'blindness'

There was an attitude and discursive practice amongst some teachers that the effects of the past were to be avoided, in an attempt to move forward. In keeping with the term colour-blindness, I classify this as 'past-blindness'. Although it is often painful to discuss past mistakes, especially with children, Giroux and others point out that "educators have a public responsibility that by its very nature involves them in the struggle for democracy" (1992, 15). The discussion of these issues, however uncomfortable it may be, is imperative for children's education, if their identities, communities and histories are to be valued and accepted. Chisholm also points out that considering the fact that apartheid shaped and produced education in the past, the 'new society' needs to "embed contemporary forms of education both as an outcome of, and factor in, the transition from apartheid" (2004, 1). Unfortunately, however, teachers have not had sufficient training to initiate constructive and honest dialogue about the past, and have not been encouraged to address their own stereotypes and painful experiences (Jansen, 2009c).

For instance, Mr Pienaar said: "I think that one should leave the past where it is and focus on the future and that is very important... I steer away from the past". And Miss Oosthuizen believed that "*They* [the learners] are not being hard done by; it was the previous generation that was being hard done by". This seems however, to be solely a teachers' point of view, and not necessarily that of the learners. Jansen (2009a) confirms that children of parents involved in past atrocities *are* affected by parents' emotions and experiences, albeit indirectly.

When asked whether she thought it was possible for teachers to address past injustices in their classrooms, Miss Foché replied:

⁴ <http://www.labour.gov.za/legislation/acts>

⁵ Section 29 in Chapter Two of the South African constitution covers basic education equality, and Section One (b) of the Employment of Educators Act makes reference to appointment of educators regarding equity and imbalances of the past.

Um, I think that's, um, with the young ones that I work with, we don't focus on that at all, because they're not aware of that. So, and I always feel, if something like that will come up, then I'll handle it, I'll discuss it. But you don't, I always feel you don't have to give children the information, it's just going to upset them, and they don't need to be upset. Because it's in the past.

She feels that her younger learners are not aware of these issues, and thus she attempts to shield or protect them from difficult inter-racial situations or past legacies. Soudien (2004) writes that this may be because teachers feel that learners do not have the power to confront the realities of inequality. Giroux (1992) and Freire (1985) point out, however, how important it is to provide spaces to discuss and critique oppressive systems and legacies of the past – no matter what the age of the learners.

Miss Foche also demonstrated an avoidance of the engagement with past issues in her class in the belief that learners are no longer affected by the decisions made by the white government pre-1994. Similarly, when asked whether she believed in focusing on the past and trying to redress it, Miss Botha replied: "It's not about the past really, it's about the future. You don't live in the past, the past is done". These are very telling words describing what many teachers are trying to do in an attempt to leave the past behind and move forward.

Geschier (2008) refers to discourses about the past through Bar-On's (1999) concept of the 'indescribable and undiscussable'. This endorses the view that teachers may be hesitant to discuss difficult issues of the past in the fear of what the 'other' might feel or think, and because of "fears and social taboos around topics that violate constructive dialogues and trust between people" (Geschier, 2008, 97). This is counter productive as it is often only when difficult topics *are* broached, that any progress or transformation may occur.

5.3.2 Past consciousness

In spite of the above, there was certainly evidence of teachers attempting to educate learners about the past and addressing some of the persisting inequalities that are a result of apartheid policies. These teachers demonstrated a clear awareness of the importance of creating an understanding and open environment for discussion of past issues and present legacies.

Mr Sogoni possessed the clearest ‘past consciousness’, through demonstrating that legacies of the past continue to have great impacts on schooling and identities, and that racism is still current in our society. He recognised that the past cannot be ignored or evaded – as many teachers wish to do. Also, unlike other teachers, Mr Sogoni did not propose an egalitarian teaching practice. His discourse provided a recognition that all learners are different. This requires a deeper understanding of learner backgrounds if teachers are to truly understand where they come from and reasons for their behaviour.

On the subject of the apartheid forced removals of coloureds from Simon’s Town to Ocean View, Mrs April said: “I remind them that it was a move that was made not because they wanted to go and see a different ocean, or because they had a view that side, but they were *forced* to go and live somewhere else”. In contrast to the approach of Miss Foche who did not want to ‘upset’ learners, this discourse displays an honest and open approach to the past, in order to educate learners adequately.

Mrs Stevens also feels the need for continued discussion and reparation. She said:

I also think that as teachers we mustn’t, there is a tendency to sweep things under the carpet and let them lie, and really, for me I don’t think that’s a good idea, we need to rather drag them out and open it up and you know, discuss these things, rather than just pretending they don’t exist. ‘Cause that really, you know, if we are just going to stick our heads in the sand I think that is going to be incredibly dangerous and that worries me sometimes... We can’t let you [learners] forget ‘cause you guys are the future.

Mrs Stevens’ concerns suggest that teachers *do* tend to ignore past issues. Her use of the word ‘drag’ acknowledges that these may be difficult to discuss, but will be even more *dangerous* to pretend they did not exist.

Mrs Haywood, an older white teacher, was also “completely aware of it all the time”. She recognised and acknowledged that learners are aware of the past too. I was very moved when she said:

‘Lest we forget’ you know, that’s the ‘nine-eleven’ saying. And we do forget. ...You must remember, you must remember. ‘Take what we can from the past and build on it in the future’. That was an old Vrystaat saying! But it’s true, without a past you have no future. The children need to know about it. For whatever they have to fight.

By using an old white Afrikaans saying, Mrs Haywood demonstrates that *all* members of society should discuss and learn from the past.

Often hand in hand with a ‘past consciousness’, goes the discourse of reparation and hope for the future. Teachers who discussed issues of the past did so in order to encourage their learners to act positively and proactively with awareness of their roles in future society. Mrs Naidoo demonstrated this by saying:

You use all the historic backgrounds of what has happened maybe in this country, and you bring it forward to the present situation now, and then you take it a step further and say, how the future should be like, you know, as far as social justice is concerned.

Mr Sogoni also referred to this when he said:

The past needs to be brought up, because our past experiences are what will teach us certain things. ...But then, how do you go forward. How do you react to those things now, or how do you see ourselves going forward.

Mrs Booysen showed a beautiful example of how she used story-telling to educate learners about the past. She wrote a story for her learners about apartheid, situating it through a grandmother telling her grandchild about what things used to be like:

But in a nice way, the way normally grandmas are allowed to tell, and I just wrote it because I just thought no, the children mustn’t get it like, ‘oh it was the whites against the blacks, and it was this and that’.

Soudien (2006) contributes succinctly to this perspective on the interconnection between past and present. He argues that:

The apartheid legacy continues to be determinative in shaping, and accounting for the character of current social behaviour in the country, including the performance of children in schools. That rich and white children perform better than poor and black children to the degree that they do is a product of the country's history. (183)

A 'past consciousness' is critical in today's teaching, in order for learners to understand where they come from and why South Africa is like it is at present. Involved in this discursive ability is the provision of increased knowledge which gives learners greater power and agency to challenge oppressive systems and engage with transformation in the future.

5.4 Constructions of false equality

McLaren writes that identities based on sameness or difference are part of an essentialist logic: "in both, individual identities are presumed to be autonomous, self-contained, and self-directed" (1994, 53). As evident in the previous sections, a tendency to cling to approaches of equality was discernible in teachers' discourses. Many white teachers adopt what Giroux refers to as notions of a "false equality" (1992, 32), which was demonstrated in the colour-blind section. This can protect racism by making it invisible, and assist the preservation of white domination in institutions (Kandaswamy, 2007). False equality discourses are typified by statements such as: "I think each child is equal. So it doesn't matter where they come from. What race they are" (Miss Botha), and, "to not sort of have favourites, or deal with people separately, but to be fair to everybody in the same way" (Mr McDonald). This attitude should be managed carefully, through positive education of difference, as it can be very harmful to learners with both visible and invisible cultural and racial identities different to that of their teachers.

The equality approach was not adopted by all teachers, however, as demonstrated by some of the black and coloured teachers. In his understanding of equity and reparation, Mr Sogoni said that:

We should never make assumptions that they should be treated equally. There are situations where people should be treated equally. ...You know, but if you talk about education, that's a different level. And you need to do things and treat things in a way that will be accommodative (Personal emphasis).

Mr Sogoni is clearly *aware* of racial disparities of the past, and the negative effects this has had on education. Unlike the colour-blind approach, he used the word 'accommodative' in an openness to difference and an awareness of equity – as opposed to equality.

Miss Tucker, a coloured teacher, also said that:

Every learner is different. But I think if we are going to say, it's the new South Africa, and now everyone is going to be treated the same, we are kind of homogenising everyone, and that might not help them... If I was going to pretend that we are all the same, I don't think that would be for anyone's benefit. So, they are equal in terms of their value, but we are not equal in terms of not having differences.

Another coloured teacher, Mr Bonsma, endorsed this when he said:

It's natural to be biased. *We are different.* Accept it. But when it gets to, well, I don't know. I don't know what our government is trying to prove... that we are all the *same*? We cannot all be the same!

Mr Bonsma's honesty provided a striking contrast to the equality approach in education through his insistence that 'we *are* different'. This openness to difference is very constructive when used appropriately, in recognition of the variance in learners' qualities and values.

Lastly, Mrs Naidoo, who is Indian, meaningfully pointed out that:

There are differences in colours and hair textures and things, and such, and where they come from, and things that they do, and I said but eventually there are lots of things that we do have in common. Some of us... some of us all enjoy 'Sevende Laan'!

This approach aligns with the concept of ‘crossing borders’ (Giroux, 1992), regarding the benefit of recognising difference while finding commonalities to ‘build bridges’ between learners (Jansen, 2009d).

5.5 Constructions of tolerance

Multiculturalism has been criticized for simply bringing about a *tolerance* for others, which underplays the inequality in power between cultures (Vandeyar, 2003). It ‘depoliticises’ race and socio-politics by focusing on culture. However, as Goldberg suggests, tolerance “presupposes that its object is morally repugnant, that it really needs to be reformed, that is, altered” (1993, 7). The call for tolerance allows a non-questioning of the privilege that comes with the dominant ideology, and enables an escape from issues of “inequality, power, ethics, race, and ethnicity in a way that could actually lead to social transformation” (Bartolome and Macedo, 1997, 232).

‘Tolerance’ was mentioned in a few of the teachers’ discourses. Mr McDonald said that: “in a sense in that way we have highlighted differences, yes... And we just think it helps in terms of *tolerance*, if you understand why somebody is doing something it makes it a lot easier for all of us”. Miss Oosthuizen also said that: “I think [having diverse classrooms] helps you in terms of *tolerance* ...and gives you insight, which you wouldn’t have had otherwise”. The use of the word tolerance and insight in the same sentence is revealing, implying that insight gives you tolerance. Insight instead should bring about *understanding* and the challenging of privilege and dominant ideological systems.

Vally and Dalamba (1999) provide a very comprehensive summary of the differences between tolerance and transformation. Often, within a ‘tolerance paradigm’, discriminatory practices are located within the individual, and this needs to shift towards a societal transformation if real change is to occur. For instance, racial problems are not just a result of prejudice (aligning with the tolerance paradigm), but are rooted in systemic racism located within institutional and interpersonal levels (transformation paradigm).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the various constructions of difference in teachers' discourses. It can be seen that notions of equality arise in the discourses when talking about race, the past, language, and tolerance. In adopting equality approaches, teachers exert a power over learners through their influence and example. There was little acknowledgement of the positions of power white teachers occupied in society by being white, heterosexual, middle class men and women. Assumptions of these positions as the 'norm' can be destructive to learners who come from backgrounds of different languages, oppression, disability, homosexuality, or low socio-economic status. Questioning and challenging personal power can be difficult and uncomfortable, but if teachers do so they open up spaces for dialogue, and are able to exert a positive influence over others. It is also largely through teachers that learners come to appreciate all factors of diversity and learn to challenge dominant white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied hegemonies.

It is interesting that as a result of our turbulent past, white South Africans in particular, attempt to ignore difference through discourses of tolerance and equality. These discourses make use of colour-blind and 'past-blind' approaches to pretend equality. In many instances, language and culture are used as 'difference' in place of race. This merely serves to entrench differences that were previously qualified by race. There are, however, instances of race and past cognisance among teachers which can lead to constructive discussions of difference and the empowerment of learners, and these need to be recognised and developed.

CHAPTER SIX:

APPROACHES TOWARD INTEGRATION AND DIFFERENCE

6.1 Dominant approaches

This chapter will discuss the dominant approaches towards difference and integration in classrooms that emerged from the teachers' discourses. These include the use of multicultural education, assimilation, 'othering', and the contributionist approach. The word 'dominant' refers here to the approaches often passed down by white education authorities and mono-cultural educational traditions. They largely accord with the perceived norm of society, which aligns with white English heterosexual male-dominated world.

6.1.1 Multicultural education

Grant and Sachs write that multicultural education should "prepare students to deal with race, class and gender oppression in society, and to take charge of their life circumstances" (1995, 93). *Most* teachers in the sample however were not aware of purposefully practising multicultural education as such, and only ten showed evidence of attempting their own forms of multicultural education. Mrs April said that: "I don't have that facility, or I don't know how I could measure it. I'm not trained in that way. I wouldn't know *at all*, where to start, or what to look for!" Although she may have misinterpreted the question, it emphasises that teachers are not provided with training to teach in a critical *or* multicultural way. As a result, many rely on dominant approaches such as assimilation, which is passed down to them by their training institutions or schools.

Often, simply being in diverse classrooms forces teachers to teach 'multiculturally'. As a result, many teachers mentioned that their teaching styles were more "like an incidental teaching" (Mrs Naidoo), and personally inspired. Mrs Stevens said: "I suppose, it's very basic, but I'm always using examples from cross culture, cross religion, constantly using examples from that", in order to include and encourage all her learners. Similarly, Miss Tucker does not *consciously* teach 'multiculturally', but she chooses examples or texts that:

Try to cater for different things that are going on in South Africa, or different, sort of people, whether it's celebrities or politicians, whatever it might be, things in South Africa, as well as internationally ...I want them to know about things outside of their own, sort of comfort zone, and areas of experience.

This demonstrates a willingness to include all cultures and identities in the class, and educate learners *about* difference.

The teachers' responses show that although the dominant *theoretical* approach towards educating diverse learners in South Africa has swung towards multicultural education, *teachers* still rely on assimilationist, contributionist, and colour-blind approaches due to lack of training. These are discussed below.

6.1.2 Assimilationist approach

Soudien (2004) confirms that many approaches towards multicultural education in desegregated schools tend towards forms of assimilation, where schooling replicates the beliefs and values of the dominant cultural status quo. Friere refers to this as education that aims "to adapt the learner to his environment" (1985, 116). The assimilationist approach "denies the linguistic and cultural capital that black students bring into the school by absorbing them into the white hegemonic culture of the school" (Vandeyar and Jansen, 2008, 11). This is often the simplest and most comfortable approach for schools. It is evident that some of the schools (and teachers) are still ethnocentric, and do not make allowances for other religious holidays or customs. For example, many schools still expect learners to attend Christian assemblies and listen to Bible readings.

Through the assimilation approach, learners are expected to comply with the imposed status quo of (often previously white) schools. The concept of 'sameness' "serves as a device to conceal or render subservient 'other' cultures to the domination of the previously privileged culture(s)" (Nkomo and Vandeyar, 2008, 51). Mrs Naidoo related that although they claim they teach "multiculture as the curriculum ...they don't. You know, there's a lot of different cultures but only a certain culture gets taught". Mr Bonsma unconsciously discussed assimilation in school when he said:

Because the majority of our learners is so-called coloured, where you get the feeling that the kids in the class, they would not want to, they have to adapt to *their* way of doing, or their culture, if one can put it like that.

A teacher who is conscious of teaching critically would have the ability to appreciate difference without attempting to assimilate learners into the dominant culture of the school or classroom. To move away from an assimilationist approach, teachers need to be “empowered to challenge and interrogate the power relations at schools... Through making learners to feel their identities are validated by the culture of the school” (Nkomo and Vandeyar, 2008, xi).

With the exception of those two examples, the assimilationist approach was not easily identifiable from teachers’ discourses in this study. What was more evident was the presence of ‘othering’ among teachers. It appears that teachers in this study aligned more strongly with contributionist, equality and colour-blind approaches. This may have been different if the study had included participant observation.

6.1.2.1 ‘Othering’ within the assimilation approach

There were instances of ‘othering’ recounted by four teachers – always involving coloured or black learners. Frankenberg (1993) writes that racial ‘others’ are viewed as apart from the Western self, which is seen as normal and race-less. Three of the teachers’ statements situated English as the ‘norm’, and placed other languages as different, and therefore a problem. Mr Bonsma said: “In many cases it isn’t always possible for people to understand *them* when *they* speak in their mother tongue” (personal emphasis), and Mr Pienaar said that: “the problem, the big problem is that our coloured friends, they want to be taught in English”. The use of the word ‘friends’ is problematic, as it sounds patronising towards other languages and races. Eyber (1997) writes that ‘othering’ displays a continued displacement of the teacher self from learners different from themselves. When talking about not being able to understand the learners who spoke African languages in her class, Miss Oosthuizen said: “especially if there is a difficult class, you know, and if you reprimand them then they will have their little things to say or whatever”. Here language differences are used as the distinguishing factors between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and English is continually placed as the language ideal.

Miss Warren provided another example of racial ‘othering’. She said:

I don’t exactly know how to put this... ja, it was good to learn about the *black culture*, of the things happening that you don’t always understand so you get more respect for *them*, and it was, because of Africa is quite new in this, um, the apartheid is out now, and its in the, *constructive* years... (Personal emphasis).

This demonstrates an essentialising of a ‘black culture’, suggesting that because they are different from Miss Warren’s identity, all black people fit neatly into one ‘other’ culture. She creates the ‘other’ through the construction of a black culture – something which only the ‘other’ possesses (Eyber, 1997). Durrheim and Mtose (2006) argue that blackness is often thought of as a singular political category comprising all oppressed blacks, because they share a narrative of suffering and exploitation. This links to the idea of all black identities as ‘different’ to the ‘normal’ self.

Vandeyar and Jansen write that a “fear of ‘the other’ has driven citizens back under the umbrella of safe and familiar racial communities and, ironically, often reinforced a sense of race-based identification” (2008, 10). This is true for many of the previously white government and private schools, who encourage ‘aggressive assimilation’ (Soudien, 2004), which does not lead to true integration.

6.1.3 Contributionist approach

Vandeyar (2003) argues that in most South African schools, the extent of multiculturalism goes only as far as having cultural days, fetes, food fairs and costume displays. This relates to a contributionist, or celebratory approach (Meier, 2005). This is evidenced by Mrs Pyoos, in her attempt to educate learners about other cultures and religions. She said:

Oh last year I had a multicultural class, yes. ...You know, you ask him to act in your class. They do the acting, they do the speaking... And in the class, if I should have a mixed diversity class, I will organise a cultural day. And then let them dress in their culture. And you bring your music, you bring your music. Things like that. That is diversity of culture. Bringing the children nearer to one another. So that they can understand one another.

This approach, however, does not equip teachers, parents or students with “the tools necessary to combat racism and ethnic discrimination” (Vandeyar, 2003, 195). In her attempt to ‘bring children nearer to each other’, Mrs Pyoos may instead be singling out learners, and stereotyping or idealising differences. By getting them to ‘act’, ‘dress’, or ‘bring their music’, learners may be made to feel that *their* culture is *different*, and on display for others to see, not necessarily to appreciate, or learn about. This ignores similarities, and assumes that “culture is a fixed construct... which the ‘owners’ of the culture alone can control, ...[and] makes crude stereotypes possible” (Eyber, Dyer and Versfeld, 1997, 49). This approach does not transform the fundamental nature of the school (Dornbrack, 2008, Carrim, 1998), but encourages *accommodation* of ‘cultural others’.

6.2 Non-dominant approaches

This section discusses some of the non-dominant methods of approaching education and teaching – those that can be included in a ‘critical multicultural’ viewpoint. Sadly, there were only a few examples of each, but they must be viewed as a seed of hope in the field of traditional multicultural methods.

6.2.1 Diversity grammar and dialogue

Giroux encourages critical teachers to speak *to* “important social, political, and cultural issues” (1992, 35). Steyn refers to this as a ‘diversity grammar’, which facilitates “a discussion of race, racism, and antiracism, and the parallel concepts employed in the analysis of other forms of oppression” (2007a, 1). McLaren also asks whether teachers “have access to a language that allows them to sufficiently critique and transform existing social and cultural practices that are defended by liberals and conservatives as unifyingly democratic?” (1995, 45). This ‘grammar’ plays a crucial role in critical education, and moves away from methods associated with the traditional ‘banking’ mode of education that Freire (1985) found so problematic. It is, however, more often than not developed purely by the teachers themselves, in an attempt to educate and emancipate their learners through discussing important current issues.

Mr Sogoni stood out as the teacher employing the most positive ‘diversity grammar’ in his teaching. He related that he openly encourages students to ask questions about difficult issues,

which shows that he is willing to talk about race and racism to both his peers and learners in a manner that promotes discussion and a deeper understanding. In the past, many learners had to fall back on stereotypes to govern their thinking and behaviour. Possibly because he is black himself, Mr Sogoni was particularly conscious of racial issues at school, and was able to expose them for what they are: embedded hegemonic processes. Importantly, he was not afraid to make these practices visible to those in control.

Mr Sogoni's language demonstrated a willingness to engage with issues of oppression and discrimination. He acknowledged that: "You need to have an understanding of broader issues generally, not just within the school, but in the broader community or your feeder communities". He makes use of his interactive whiteboard, discussing:

The issues that kids feel uncomfortable about, not having to mention or talk about, I *raise* those issues in class. We talk about racial issues, *openly* and kids need to do that. Because then they get to raise their opinions, and their views.

This encourages questioning and exploration, and empowers his learners. "So kids get to explore a lot of those things, [and] I think with a more informed position, they will be more able to deal with issues" (Mr Sogoni). This approach encourages learner emancipation and a deeper understanding of factors affecting both individual and social identity formation in a country still fraught with disparities.

Mrs Booysen demonstrated her openness to discussion of diversity issues when she said:

The children must be made aware of all the different religions, of all the different cultures, so they can know what is Hinduism, Judaism, and then they understand each other, they respect each other for who they are.

Mrs April also said that she uses the subject she is teaching to: "teach about life and life skills because I think that's more important than the actual subject I'm teaching". These discourses demonstrate examples of teachers stepping out of the traditional role of 'teacher', and into one of 'educator' for learners' futures.

Mrs Stevens provided many examples of her appreciation of diversity through her discourse. She acknowledged how important it is in shaping identities. As an English teacher, she:

explain[s] to everyone before we even start a novel like 'District Six' the whole point of addressing the past and dealing with these issues and trying to understand them is that we don't, I don't think we can be allowed to forget, because it needs to inform where we are going.

This type of 'grammar' encourages a deeper understanding of social and historical issues, and encourages discussion among learners. Matthews writes that curriculum and teaching content must be "culturally relevant and... reflect or encourage a diversity of perspectives" (2005, 97).

Linked to a diversity grammar is Freire's concept of *dialogue*, which encourages a "synthesis between the educator's maximally systematized knowing and the learners' minimally systematized knowing" (1985, 54). Teachers who encourage this dialogue pose problems for learners, in order to encourage a more critical view of their reality. He/she is a knowing subject, who "calls forth knowledge from his students" (*ibid*, 55).

It appears that this type of dialogue is practiced by a minority of the teachers, a few having stated that they actively encouraged discussions regarding current issues that students face every day, such as HIV/AIDS, race, economic problems, sexuality, and gender discrimination. This demonstrates a consciousness of the benefit of expression and openness in the face of difficult issues. The presence of dialogue also demonstrates the view that social reality is constantly in the making, and cannot be seen as a static factor having minimal influence on learners' lives. The examples however, are the exception, and most teachers did not display evidence of a comprehensive diversity grammar and dialogue.

6.2.2 Curriculum interpretation

Nkomo and Vandeyar (2008) found that the South African curriculum does not reflect the diversity of their learners, and it is left up to teachers to take the initiative. Likewise, McKinney (2005) found that textbooks are not adequately representing learners with regards to gender,

disability, rural experiences, and working class settings. Some teachers in this study, however, demonstrated an appreciation for, and use of, the curriculum – especially the English one – in its inclusion of many cultures, races and religions, and assistance in teaching for diversity and difference. Although it is not entirely inclusive, a skilful teacher can use the curriculum to teach awareness and emancipation. Those teachers following a critical position need also to challenge what Freire (1998) refers to as ‘pre-packaged educational materials’ and not to blindly follow the prescriptive curriculum.

Mrs Patel had a very positive attitude toward the current curriculum:

But I found that because the curriculum is so, vast, it allows one to do that very easily, and you have enough resources so you would do, for example African poetry, poetry that spans cultural influences, and I think one has to be very um, sensitive. In fact, the curriculum is such that it includes, it incorporates the cultural diversity.

Mrs Stevens was very descriptive in her appreciation of diversity and the curriculum. She believed that studying novels like ‘Buckingham Palace, District Six’ provides great opportunities for learners as it prompts them to voice their own experiences and opinions in a safe space. She described how she uses the novel to involve her learners in their family histories and collective religious or racial experiences:

It’s wonderful we get to talk about, we get to hear about, peoples different experiences, like, ‘you’re a Muslim, tell us what its like, we want to understand’ and your gran lived in District Six so lets talk about it.

Mrs Gous also made use of her position as an English teacher to explore topical issues: “You need to ensure that you are in all fairness, that you present a balanced judgment or balanced viewpoint to *all* the members of your class. Because we are all human, and we deal with humans”. This does not necessarily apply to English only, as demonstrated by the Mr Sogoni, who teaches Mathematics. Through the curriculum, he encourages discussions of topical issues such as HIV/AIDS, cholera and alcoholism. “This is in my maths class! I actually am not afraid to stop my lesson and say right, let’s talk about this, what are your views and things”.

Nkomo and Vandeyar call for pedagogical approaches that teach *to* and *through* culture, with “contextual curriculum planning” (2008, 4). This engages all learners in lessons, promotes respect for and understanding of difference, and exposes learners to issues such as racism and diversity (to name a few). All of the English teachers in this sample mentioned how they appreciated the variety of South African experiences included in the curriculum, and the opportunities this provides for discussion and debate amongst the learners.

These examples demonstrate the possibilities that arise when teachers interpret the curriculum in an imaginative way, to the advantage of their diverse learners. They manage to transform books into opportunities and adventures, to encourage and include *all* learners in exploring and growing in the classroom. Even though the curriculum may not always reflect the diversity of all learners, many teachers approach the curriculum creatively, interpreting it according to the needs of the learners. In theory, a critical multicultural approach in classrooms would allow for all voices to be heard, and would encourage a greater understanding of the self and others through the curriculum. It would also raise awareness of how discourses emerge to suit the interests of individual groups (Grant and Sachs, 1995).

6.2.3 Border pedagogies

A few teachers do encourage the formation of border identities and promote certain ‘border crossings’ (Giroux, 1988, McLaren, 1993) among learners, by encouraging interactions and challenging learners to think critically with regard to their positions. Within this, teachers are able to understand multiple *differences* between students, but unite them through their *similarities*, such as their collective experiences of systems of race, class and gender oppression and discrimination (Kanpol, 1995).

Border pedagogy encourages creating or incorporating into the curriculum forms of knowledge and practice that are not based on Western or English models (Giroux, 1992). Kanpol recommends that this kind of teaching should focus on the “commonalities of voice, agency and social practice” (1995, 183), which acknowledges the pluralities of struggles rather than the difference of oppression. Mrs Naidoo identified this when she said: “There are differences in... where they come from, and things that they do... but eventually there are lots of things that we

do have in common”. Mrs Pyoos also stated that: “We are no different. What is different in human, nothing. We are all human, but we only got different cultures. And we only got different backgrounds. You see and that is the way we learn”. This aligns with the ideal of finding “similarities within differences” amongst learners (Kanpol, 1995, 189).

These discourses were not common among the teachers interviewed. What is therefore required is assistance and training to view culture as “a shifting sphere of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences, and voices intermingle amid diverse relations of power and privilege” (Giroux, 1992, 32). Schools need to provide a nurturing environment to help teachers and learners develop and understand individual identities. There needs to be a recognition of difference without essentialising it, providing a constructive foundation to discover commonalities in classrooms.

6.2.4 Teaching for social justice

Those teachers who employ critical multicultural education have a greater understanding and conceptualisation of the importance of social justice in teaching, and how this involves challenging past and present oppressive systems. Included in this approach is a conscious empowerment of previously disadvantaged learners and an awareness of learners’ history. As Mrs Naidoo said:

I feel that maybe in society there would be less prejudism amongst people if they are taught from a young age, that you need to value and appreciate what you can, learn from one another, you don’t have to, you can respect it, but you’ve also got to learn things. You have to learn all the time; you must open your mind to it.

Through the analysis, it appears that it is up to individual teachers to act for positive change. The teachers, however, “do not have the analytic sophistication to engage with issues of identity” (Soudien, 2004, 102). To ‘teach for social justice’ adds another layer to teaching, which is not always achievable in many of our schools. It often boils down to a ‘personal decision to change’ on the part of the teachers. This emphasises once again why there is an urgent need for support mechanisms to be put in place in order to educate teachers for diversity, and to help them through the process of enabling and encouraging others.

6.3 Conclusion

“There’s a huge mix of different cultures but each one must be seen as equal” (Miss Botha). There are many approaches that teachers adopt in teaching desegregated classrooms, and this section has discussed only a few. It appears that teachers adopt either dominant approaches in classrooms such as assimilation and contributionist ones, or non-dominant approaches such as the social justice approach and border crossings. These have various consequences for learners’ diversity awareness, ranging from deliberate enculturation to emancipation, depending on the position and involvement of the teacher.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

FACTORS AFFECTING DISCOURSES

This section reports on the challenges teachers face in desegregated schools that lead to the discourses discussed in the above sections.

7.1 Personal factors

7.1.1 Race of teachers

Through the course of the research, a noticeable trend emerged, dividing *most* of the teachers by race in terms of their discursive approaches to race and the past. This included willingness to facilitate classroom discussions about oppressive hegemonies, and racial, cultural and ethnic differences. There was a clear divide between the attitudes of coloured and black teachers on one hand, and white teachers on the other, when it came to openly discussing race and the effects of race on classroom dynamics. Black and coloured teachers were by and large much more willing to broach the topic of race, and often initiated talking about it. White teachers generally avoided race altogether, as if the mere mention of race would be seen as racist. When asked to talk about differences, they largely referred to cultural differences, although it was obvious that these ‘cultural’ differences were in fact racial in many cases. Out of the eleven white teachers interviewed in this sample, only four openly discussed racial issues, whereas all of the twelve black and coloured teachers were willing to do so. Nieto (2008) also experienced this phenomenon in her research, where white teachers were uncomfortable discussing race and racism, and preferred to discuss gender, class or culture as features of diversity. Frankenberg refers to this as the “polite language of race” (1993, 142), which is typical of the colour-blind discourse.

Nieto states that “racism is an excruciatingly difficult issue for most people” (2008, xxviii). If teachers were able to discuss issues of race and difference more openly both within and between race groups, relations would improve and some of the negativity that characterises many discourses would dissipate. Here, workshops to encourage open discourse would play a great role in improving racial – and diversity – literacy. As with racial cognisance, it appeared that many of the white teachers seemed to be at pains to move past apartheid legacies, and to exclude

influences of the past from their classrooms. In contrast, the coloured and black teachers interviewed were more willing to discuss issues of the past with me, as well as with their learners.

The reluctance to speak about and acknowledge racial differences amongst white teachers may be a result of fear. Fear of being viewed as racist, fear of raising past mistakes, fear of being blamed for past injustices, and fear of not belonging in South Africa. Mrs Haywood admitted that as a result, teachers are often: “artificially politically correct... Especially being a white person, the moment I challenge a coloured or a black or another race, the moment I challenge them on educational issues, they throw the racist line”. In order to avoid this potential finger pointing, many white teachers adopt the colour-blind approach, or use culture as a synonym instead. As Mrs Stevens said: “I sometimes feel that perhaps as adults we, because of the history and everything, *obviously*, that we are *very* aware of it”. This may also be through a subliminal guilt that many white people carry with them for the misdeeds of the past. Dornbrack confirms this in her research, saying that “many white South Africans, in an attempt to obliterate the boundaries between black and white that were associated with apartheid, were, and are, fearful of recognising differences, in case they are seen to be racist” (2008, 6).

7.1.2 Age and experience of teachers

It was interesting to note that, of the twenty three teachers interviewed, all seven teachers who were over fifty years old were more aware of diversity matters, and possessed more open discourses about race and the past. This contrasted to the younger teachers, whose discourses tended to align with the colour-blind approach. This *may* be because the older teachers have lived through more political and social upheavals, and they are more experienced and recognise the importance of change. However, one might equally expect them to have hardened attitudes towards race.

Much of the literature on critical education emphasises valuing learner opinions and viewpoints (Meier, 2005, Valentin, 2007, McLaren, 1994). This was clearly visible in the discourses of older teachers, such as that of Mrs Haywood, who said: “What I *do* like, what I really like, is when students say, ‘Mrs Haywood, in *my* culture...’ that is so sweet, and I like that, I encourage that”. This interest in and attention to different learner opinions by teachers gives learners a sense of

autonomy and respect for their own background and belief systems. It is very important for learners to appreciate and value their own cultures in our multicultural society.

Amongst others, Greene (1998), Young (1998) and McLaren (1994) emphasise the role of teaching for social justice. This aims to arouse a sense of community membership, and a heightened sense of social consciousness. Greene writes that it is “teaching for the sake of arousing the kinds of vivid, reflective, experiential responses that might move students to come together” (1998, xxix). Creating real, valued experiences was the type of teaching the older teachers in the sample were striving to facilitate for their learners. While I do not believe that the older teachers consciously *propound* a social justice approach, much of their discourse resonates with the ideals of this approach, some of which has been mentioned in the literature review.

One perspective on older teachers’ diversity cognisance stems from Frankenberg’s (1993) discursive perspectives on race. The origins of racial identification relied on essentialism, which views race and gender as determinants of human behaviour, and identities as fixed and rigid (Vandeyar and Jansen, 2008). This belief has since formed the basis for some race relations. Older teachers may thus be more race cognisant because they grew up in the race essentialist era – and therefore ‘see’ race’. They do so, however, in a way that acknowledges and appreciates the value of difference, as a result of their extended experience in teaching.

7.2 Structural factors

7.2.1 Desegregation

Desegregation provides the most tangible influence on discourses around difference and change. With most teachers having trained and worked in mono-cultural institutions, the various discourses and teaching styles adopted have either been passed down by their institutions or reflect teachers’ efforts trying to do the ‘right thing’. Two respondents⁶ admitted to being ‘shocked’ when the first black learners joined their classes. It was often the teachers who admitted to being challenged by desegregation however, that spoke of learning from their students and consequently becoming more accepting of learners of colour. Mrs Naidoo said

⁶ Mr van Jaarsveld and Mrs Booysen

that: “initially [she] thought it would be very very tough. But eventually... my whole perception changed there”.

One aspect of desegregation that emerged from the interviews was the negative perception of mixing learners of all academic abilities in one class. Mrs Haywood said: “We put cement shoes on our children who can fly... they have to be dragged down by children who really are no competition”. The complaint was expressed often that schools are not allowed to stream their classes, which means that many learners do not get the attention they require from their teachers, as there are too many with different abilities in one class.

So you end up with forty different tasks being run in the same class, and that's, you can't handle it! It's impossible to handle that kind of thing; there is no time for remediation... I have to use one learner to help another, and that's not fair. (Mrs Haywood)

This has implications for inclusive teaching practices and discourses, and is a great challenge for teachers with no experience of teaching learners of varying levels of competency and ability.⁷

7.2.2 Diversity Training

Greene writes that “it cannot be taken for granted that everyone will notice instances of injustice nor recognise it for what it is” (1998, xxx). Diversity education and training for teachers is thus vital for encouraging open discourses and socially just approaches in desegregated schools. In this sample, however, only four out of the twenty three teachers⁸ stated that they had received training manuals or attended courses. They felt that these had been useful. The rest of the teachers said that they relied on personal experience, with the result that many struggled to communicate effectively with their diverse learners. Mrs Haywood said that teachers were “thrown in the deep deep end, and are still trying to struggle to come up from the bottom”. Hemson (2006), and Nkomo and Vandeyar (2008) also found that teachers receive very little support from the DoE to manage diverse learners.

⁷ In the United States, schools are streamed, and ‘children of colour’ – often of non-American origin – are all being placed in the lower achieving classes, while white American children are kept in the higher classes. This reinforces the divides and stereotypes that some schools have worked so hard to get away from. The South African system is therefore advanced in this regard, but it does provide another reason to reduce class sizes and increase teacher numbers so that teachers can contribute more time each learner. For more information see Orfield (2004).

⁸ Mrs Patel, Mr Smit, Mr Parker, and Mr van Jaarsveld

An example of the need for diversity training was highlighted in a comparison between two teacher discourses at the same school. Mrs Stark was acutely aware of homophobic issues amongst her older learners, and believed it to be a big problem in their school. Mrs April, on the other hand, said: “No, not at all. I haven’t come across that”. This demonstrates the need for teachers to receive assistance in becoming more sensitive and receptive to learners experiencing discrimination.

Mrs Naidoo shared a disheartening account of a fellow teacher who struggled with her own “prejudism”, and has “huge issues with teaching black learners”. On a school outing, her colleague scolded the learners by saying “you are like a bunch of darkies in a taxi to Soweto”. This type of description did not come up elsewhere, but may have been a ‘gem’ given to me by this honest teacher. It is another example of why diversity training for teachers is so important. Related to the lack of diversity training is poor governmental support, relying on personal experiences, and the relevance of cultural immersion. These are discussed below.

7.2.2.1 Little government support or training

Many teachers described the lack of governmental support through and after the 1994 democratic transition. Assistance could have provided models for best practice and hopefully, encouraged greater openness about difference.⁹ For example, Mr Sogoni said that he had not “had *one* workshop organised by the Department of Education where they say, let’s deal with these issues”. He asked “why the department [is not] moving into the school and saying, we want to have a workshop with this school, whether it involves parents, and learners, or just staff, something that will help heal some of those problems”. Mrs Haywood also said that: “it is your personal capacity. ... But from government wise, I didn’t learn anything. They didn’t prepare us for this at all”.

There is evidently an urgent need for support and training for teachers working in diverse classrooms. This was highlighted again by the honest description from Miss Oosthuizen. She asked:

⁹ On the other hand, state interventions might have done just what school institutions are doing and pass down traditional, unquestioned methods of dealing with difference, such as colour-blindness and contributionist methods.

Like what the hell do you when a child comes to you and says well actually, my boyfriend and I have just been caught having a shag upstairs, you know, what do you do? Like this is my problem as a teacher? Like when a kid jumps up in class and accuses you of being *racist*, you know, like just step outside, calmly, what do you do?

The general attitude in schools seems to be that teachers ought to be able to cope with *all* kinds of learners, from *all* backgrounds, in an all encompassing, 'angelic' capacity. As Mr McDonald, a vice principal, said:

I think the best medicine is to be thrown into it and just cope ... I think we have kind of assumed that all the teachers who are working here are just comfortable with just teaching a boy, being a boy.

Clearly, it is unfair to expect teachers to be angels, and they *do* require assistance and support before and during the teaching process. "The assumption that educators' conceptions will change simply because policies and school contexts have changed is naïve, yet this seems to be the Department of Education expectation" (Vandeyar and Killen, 2007, 111).

7.2.2.2 Relying on personal experience

Consequently, most teachers are forced to rely on their own experiences and intuition to guide their methods and approaches toward teaching. For example, Miss Oosthuizen said: "No, there was no courses, its just life experience", and Miss Botha stated that: "It's your lifestyle. Only if you make your decision to change. You need to make a radical decision in the way of changing". Mrs Naidoo acknowledged the influence of teacher attitudes in influencing integration. "If you are going to have a teacher with prejudisms, you can forget about kids like really integrating with, you know, all their cultural things with one another". Ming and Dukes (2006) confirm that many teachers have to rely on personal experience to teach diverse classrooms.

7.2.2.3 Cultural immersion

Mazibuko (2006), Meier (2005), and Moletsane et al. (2004) argue for cross racial and cross cultural immersion with other groups during training. Mr Sogoni believes that the reason why

many teachers struggle to relate to those different to them is that most teachers have not had adequate exposure to other racial and cultural groups. This exposure would assist them in dealing with and handling racial and cultural issues when they arise:

The biggest problem with people is about getting *used* to each other. ...Where communities [live] together, they don't have this problem of racism...if this was a school with only one group of race, I would have, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to learn more, about different racial groups.

He commented that racially mixed teaching institutions provide learning opportunities and valuable experiences of different races and cultures. Mrs Stevens also reflected that “experiencing something different yourself is something that needs to be encouraged at university, 'cause I don't think it was”. She specifically chose to do her practical training in a ‘township school’, which she found incredibly enlightening, albeit difficult.

It appears then, that exposure to difference in schools would benefit both teachers and learners in their understanding of diversity. This is vital for future interactions and identity formation. We must be aware, however, that sometimes an ‘immersion’ into difference can encourage negative discourses and stereotypes, and possibly impede understandings of diversity (Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna, 2004). In this respect, both diverse classrooms *and* diversity courses are important. This is mentioned by Miss Oosthuizen, who said that: “in some cases unfortunately it might *reinforce* negative stereotypes” when learners are placed in an environment where their cultures and behaviours are at variance with others’.

7.2.3 Socio-economic problems

7.2.3.1 Teachers' perspective

Lack of resources is probably the greatest factor limiting teachers in terms of their capacity to understand and teach for diversity. Lack of economic support limits the provision of training courses, assistance, and resources for teaching. The size of classes affects teachers' ability to be responsive to *all* their learners – and thus has a direct impact on teachers' approaches toward multicultural education. Large classes also hinder the ability to understand in any depth the backgrounds, culture, or personal circumstances of all the learners, which encourages the

likelihood of negative discourses and dominant approaches. Mrs Naidoo painted a very bleak picture of her school in a poor 'coloured area' of Cape Town with the problems they face due to lack of resources. "We've got lack of funds, we've got lack of resources, we've got overfull classrooms, we've got problematic teachers, who are teachers who are chronic absenters, and there's *so* many things that challenges us every day".

Mr Bonsma pointed out that with his large class he cannot do his learners justice. "Unfortunately I don't really have the time to put all my energies into this one boy. I have forty four other kids that I need to see as well". As a result, "Your brighter kids, in most cases they feel left out, because in the end you are not really catering for them as well". This hinders teachers' ability and time to understand learners' circumstances. Mr Bonsma was very frustrated by this, as he is "Familiar with the socio-economic problems of my kids, but unfortunately there's nothing I can do about it, personally... because of limited resources". These problems are also entrenched by past legacies. Miss Warren said that: "The African schools and the coloured schools are way behind; it's going to take *years* for them to catch up financially". This highlights the clear divides still visible between previously white, coloured and black schools, and the subsequent challenges teachers face through lack of financial support.

Sayed and Soudien write that "implicit in the approaches taken by... schools [are] specific attitudes about who [has] rights to admission, what constituted valid reasons for exclusion and so on" (2005, 120). Semi-privately funded schools have more choice about which learners they accept into their schools, and therefore have some control over the makeup of the school in terms of learners with disabilities – language differences often included. More affluent schools with a generous complement of teachers can choose not to accept those who may struggle in class (Kent, 2003 and Phurutse, 2005). This provides an easier classroom environment for teachers and learners, and directly affects their approach. Poorer schools, however, are only able to employ one teacher per 40-50 learners of disparate ability.

7.2.3.2 Learner difficulties

Teachers are often faced with learners who come from very poor and under-resourced backgrounds. This affects learners in their school attendance, performance, type of school attended, as well as in negative attitudes from more fortunate students. Mrs Gous said that one

of the reasons she moved away from a school in the Cape Flats was that: “it’s difficult to entrench educational values in children whose basic needs have not been met”. Mrs Booysen echoed this, saying: “learners are coming from very impoverished backgrounds, some of them don’t eat. That is also one of the things, they can’t focus. How can I concentrate if my tummy is empty?”

Mr Bonsma provides an account of the realities that learners face in under-resourced schools such as his own, which contrasts starkly to those schools with a self sustaining income:

Um, I suppose the idea is that the playing fields are level now, but it’s not really... It’s not. Uh, unfortunately most of our kids, all of our kids, won’t be able to go to those schools there, on the *other* side. They can’t afford it! So, the playing fields are not level. So, personally I feel those children on that side they have a better head start. Definitely. So ...it will definitely have a negative impact on them. ... Because, now what are you actually telling them? Although you are working your butts off here at [this school], the kids on that side, they will always be a step ahead. So that is being negative. Isn’t it? So. You focus on the road ahead. That’s what I think.

These disparities exist because “the effects of the past are still resting on those [township] schools” (Mr Sogoni). This is confirmed by Vandeyar and Jansen who write that there are two educational systems in South Africa, “small, high achieving system for the racially mixed middle classes and a large, under-performing one for the black poor” (2008, 11).

7.2.4 Lack of parental support and guidance

Many teachers reported that there is a decline in parental interest in education and support for academic projects. This is confirmed by Moletsane (2002). Mrs Pyoos attributed this to a number of factors such as: “Divorce... single parenting, you know, and also overcrowding... It leads to a lot of barriers”. She also blamed parents for “putting a stigma to their children. ‘Don’t talk to that one, he’s black, don’t talk to that one, don’t play with that one’”.

Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna (2004) attribute the lack of involvement to misunderstandings between teachers and parents. In order to bring parents into the educational

process, they recommend asking parents to assist with educational and social challenges such as those exacerbated by HIV/AIDS and poverty. Other factors come in to play too, such as parents having difficulty with transport and time-demanding jobs.

Teachers are thus adopting positions of custodianship for learners' moral and religious lives, as they believe that this guidance is often not being provided at home. Most teachers implied that many learners needed help with social behaviour and moral decision making, and parents expected them to be "the teacher, the mother, the social worker, the everything" (Mrs Gous). Miss Foche described her use of the Bible to entrench values in her class, something that she feels is very important:

It's not part of the curriculum, but I will start with a Bible story. But I will focus more on the values, necessarily than just the teaching of the Bible. The focus is more on, the value part is most important because we have quite a strong part of Muslim learners in the school, but when you, if you focus on values, then that's, ja. (Personal emphasis)

This extract brings up issues of assimilation and power. Even though she acknowledges that there *are* lots of Muslim learners, Miss Foche still feels the Bible is valuable. These good *intentions*, however, provide challenges for critical multicultural education, in that teachers project dominant school belief systems upon the learners. This situates Christianity as the 'norm' and other religions as 'other', with little regard for, or affirmation of other religions or cultures.

7.2.5 Staff meetings

One factor greatly affecting discourses of difference and approaches to teaching in desegregated schools is that there are very few practicable staff meetings to discuss racial, cultural and linguistic differences. This would assist in creating positive discourses and critical conceptions of difference in schools, and help to remove the stigma and silence surrounding difference between learners. It would also encourage teachers to ask questions and assist each other in integrating learners. Unfortunately, however, "as far as cultural issues [goes], one doesn't really address it in a meeting" (Mrs Patel), and "instead, the comments is loose, you know, 'ah these taxis put their ghetto blasters', and... I think it's important that they should [discuss it in a formal way], but they don't" (Mrs Naidoo). Discussions of this kind would assist some of the "educators that

don't know how to work with those learners. They are always just saying okay the learner just, the language is a barrier, the language is a barrier, but they don't do *anything* about it" (Mrs Booysen).

Only one¹⁰ of the teachers said that their schools had meetings to discuss racial and cultural factors constructively. From the teachers' accounts it became clear that if an issue arises between learners or staff it is dealt with by a minimal number of staff, and not by the whole staff body. Certain teachers – often the isiXhosa teachers – are instead called upon to “deal with situations as they arise” (Mr McDonald). These examples highlight the need for guided discussions and meetings *for* teachers to learn about how to deal with difference positively and effectively. When open discussion is encouraged, teachers will realise they are not alone, and that fellow staff can provide help and advice.

7.2.6 Staff demographics

The poor racial representation of teachers in schools provides another reason for the development of misguided and ill-informed discourses amongst teachers. Although some *learners* have started to ‘integrate’, there have been minimal changes in the racial composition of teaching staff (Moletsane et al. 2004, Nkomo and Vandeyar, 2008, Soudien, 2007a). Teacher attitudes towards this situation vary, often affected by a perceived threat to their positions. In this vein, Moletsane et al. (2004) call for research interventions to acknowledge white female teachers' fears and insecurities, in order to have a deeper understanding of prejudice and discrimination of the ‘other’.

In his position as vice principal, Mr McDonald agreed that: “There's no doubt that having a smattering of teachers from various race groups and cultural differences and religious groups, does make a big difference when it comes to helping to understand each other”. He contradicted his viewpoint, however, saying that he was “not comfortable with hard and fast percentages. We will always employ the teacher that we think is best for the job”. This was also evidenced by his word ‘smattering’, which reflected a certain reluctance towards transformation.

¹⁰ Mrs Pyoos

Mr Sogoni, who teaches at the same school, said that in many schools the staff intake is “one sided in terms of racial groups”, which will result in problems, “because one, if things come up, they are not going to have someone who is experienced enough to actually handle those issues”. This is one of the reasons why he supports “the department’s policy [on staff demographics] in terms of schools ...Because that would change the picture of education in South Africa. And that’s where we need to be going”.

Soudien and Sayed (2003) also found that most former white schools remain largely white staffed. This explains Mrs Gous’ struggles as a minority race in both the staff and learner contingent. She gives us a different perspective from her position as a coloured woman:

White teachers struggle to get beyond the fact that even though their colleagues are not of the same colour, they actually do have a university education and they actually can teach the boys! ...Unfortunately the privileged boys have to be exposed to a teacher of a different colour, and of a different gender, to realise... oh actually women can do this to, and oh actually coloured women can do this as well!

Mrs Gous demonstrates an important awareness of difference and the need for change, possibly *because* of being ‘a different colour, and a different gender’ herself. This emphasises the need for staff ‘desegregation’ and diversification (Nkomo and Vandeyar, 2008), in order for teachers and learners to become more aware and accepting of difference. If learners are able to change their mindset regarding abilities of other races and cultures, it could create a movement for change throughout the country regarding perceptions of the ‘other’.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter explored the challenges faced by teachers in desegregated schools, both on a personal and structural level. These included the effects that race and age of teachers have on attitudes towards difference. The sample shows that black and coloured, and older teachers are more willing and able to discuss difference constructively, and teach critically. Structural factors also impact on teachers’ discourses and approaches towards difference. These relate mainly to the amount of support – both financially and physically – that teachers receive, in order to teach

critically. The availability of support for teachers encourages or restricts them in their ability and willingness to engage with issues of diversity and integration at many levels, and has implications for their discursive constructions of difference.

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CHAPTER EIGHT:

CONCLUSION

Teachers help to socialise learners into a particular way of looking at the world – common views of what is right and wrong, what is moral, ethical or aesthetic (Khoapa and Mzamane, 1998). Their approaches toward learner differences and integration can thus play a hugely important role in social transformation, because schools “become the nuclei of the transformation of futures” (Vandeyar and Killen, 2006, 383). With our increasing mix of cultures in schools, there can be little more important than assisting teachers to facilitate non-threatening environments conducive to learning, and to create environments where learners feel comfortable and respected for their gender, culture and belief systems. This study has found that this can be achieved through encouraging border crossings, examining teacher identities, creatively interpreting the curriculum, and acknowledging the value of home languages, to name a few. Nkomo and Vandeyar (2008) remind us that school based efforts at integration will have societal ramifications, and education should therefore be the first place to start when attempting to motivate society towards positive change.

This research set out to discover teachers’ discourses and approaches towards diversity and integration in desegregated schools, through an in-depth analysis of teachers’ narratives. The discourse analysis allowed for a deep and personal look into perceptions and attitudes towards difference, as relayed through narratives. A critical multicultural perspective was adopted, which involves colour consciousness and past consciousness, and rejects equality and contributionist approaches. In the course of the research, the more immediate needs of teachers often came to the fore in the face of seemingly more pressing problems. These included a critical lack of resources and funding, large classes, and excessive time spent on administration. Teachers with fewer resources and support focused more on practical problems, and spent less time on matters of diversity. These problems, however, all directly affect teaching for diversity and teachers’ capacity to manage and encourage true *integration* in schools.

It emerged from the analysis that teachers adopt a variety of discourses to cope with and manage difference. Many of these correlate with dominant hegemonic methods of teaching, such as the use of multicultural, assimilationist and contributionist approaches. The research suggests that

teachers are employing colour-blind and equality strategies as means of coping with difference, often due to a critical lack of knowledge and training to deal with diversity and integration.

The discourses around difference and integration are clearly influenced by teachers' racial origins. It became evident that white teachers are more reluctant to discuss differences and residual effects of our turbulent past. This may be due to fear of being accused as racist through the discussion of difference – which still largely relates to race in South Africa. Teachers cannot be blamed for this, however, as their discourses are affected by a lack of experience and confidence in dealing with the 'other'. This applies to black teachers too. Other factors influencing discourses include teachers' age and experience in the field, socio-economic barriers, little diversity training, lack of support from parents, and infrequent or non-existent staff meetings to discuss and understand difference.

This thesis proposes that the adoption of a colour-blind discourse often goes hand in hand with other forms of 'blindness' – those relating to the past, and to culture. This blatantly ignores the effects that the social construction of race *still* has on children today. It appears that aiming for a critical multicultural perspective in education may be expecting too much from teachers. The teachers who attempted a multicultural form of education demonstrated good intentions, but their methods pointed to the use of assimilationist and contributionist approaches. It became evident that change is often entirely dependant on individual teachers and their attitudes towards different 'others'.

Among the teachers interviewed, there appeared to be a general awareness of difference, but the degree to which differences were approached varied. The research showed that there is little affirmation of learners' home languages, with language being used to set apart the non-English 'other' from the English norm. Many schools and teachers are situating the 'problem' of language difference with learners and parents, and not with themselves. This serves to entrench difference previously defined by race. With regard to discourses toward change, many teachers seemed to focus on equality and sameness. Few teachers instigated discussions of difference, and even fewer had a real conception of equity in schools.

Out of a sample of twenty three, only one teacher could be seen to be attempting *conscious* critical multicultural education. This involved a deep engagement with issues of diversity and difference,

including racial differences and legacies of the past still faced in schools all over South Africa. This teacher's narrative acknowledged the presence of racial differences and the effects that this and our turbulent past have had on education in South Africa. It also involved a critical awareness of the socio-economic situation of the learners at his school, as well as of differences between schools. This avoids generalisations of learners and the view that they are all 'equal'.

The different approaches teachers adopt with their learners have serious implications for intercultural communication and cultural understanding between and amongst teachers and learners. It is imperative for teachers to become aware of their *own* cultural and language backgrounds, in order to be responsive and sensitive to the needs of their diverse learners. Jansen (2009d) writes that educators require an understanding that there are a multiplicity of 'ways of knowing'. This understanding encourages openness and receptivity to the value that different cultures and identities bring with them into the classroom. It is also the tough responsibility of teachers to instil and encourage 'meaningful interaction' (Nkomo et al. 2004) between learners to allow border crossings and narratives – "in order to re-author the discourses of oppression" (McLaren, 1995, 55).

Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna (2004) argue that schools have become places where communities expect to benefit from social, emotional and educational services. All too often it is assumed that the ability to be sensitive to a diversity of needs in learners comes naturally to all teachers. This research has found that teachers require 'empowerment', which Giroux defines as "the ability to think and act critically" (1992, 11). Only through this 'empowerment' will they in turn be able to encourage *their* learners to think and act critically, to prepare them for the realities of society. Diversity interventions for teachers and principals are thus vital. More often than not teachers have had to develop their own adaptive strategies and responses to provide learners with the optimal learning opportunities, with no prior training or support. What is thus required is assistance for teachers to acquire a deep knowledge and understanding of the diverse backgrounds of learners, so that these differences may be appreciated and incorporated into the culture of the classroom. To ignore, or alternatively, to idealise difference is not constructive.

This thesis thus contributes to the current literature and field of diversity by highlighting the dire need for diversity training for teachers – both before and during their teaching careers. Most

existing research focuses on student teachers. There is however, a great deal of insight to be gained from the voices of experienced in-service teachers, who have developed valuable techniques and approaches towards dealing with diversity. Some of the alternative approaches teachers are adopting in a response to diversity and difference in their classrooms include a colour-cognisance and past-consciousness, and the creative interpretation of the curriculum.

Teacher enrichment programmes therefore need to be instigated with the goal of educating for social justice and empowerment, enabling learners to think rationally and critically. This would produce confident and well-adjusted learners who are enabled to challenge dominant constructions of knowledge creation. This thesis highlights the clear need for diversity training handbooks and workshops, and research into their benefits on teachers and learners in our schools and communities.

Kanpol (1995) reminds us that public schools are sites of “struggle, hope and possibility” (189). It is vital not to lose sight of that potential for change and transformation that schools and their teachers provide in shaping the futures of learners and society, for “within each one of us there are the seeds of change ... [having] an audacious act of faith that the way things are is neither inevitable nor immutable” (Ayers, Hunt & Quinn, 1998, xiv).

CHAPTER NINE:

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a great need for increased multi-cultural understanding and diversity training in South African schools, but there are few practical guidelines on how to implement these ideas. While this thesis has a limited research base and relies heavily on racial classifications, it reveals a paucity of research into the methods that teachers are currently employing in their diverse classrooms. The field of diversity in education would benefit greatly from further research. Hopefully, guidelines can emerge from this research, to assist teachers in developing their knowledge and skills to teach effectively in culturally diverse classrooms (Meier, 2005). I am wary of proposing recommendations for action in the awareness of my position as a young white middle-class woman, who has not suffered under any great oppression. However, it is hoped that some of the following recommendations may be useful.

9.1 Language

While I acknowledge the time constraints on teachers, the ability to speak a South African language other than English or Afrikaans would increase a critical multicultural teaching capacity. This would *greatly* assist teachers in their practice, and consequently encourage improved academic confidence amongst struggling learners. Mazibuko (2006) endorses this, and suggests that all 'beginning teachers' develop a proficiency in English, Afrikaans and one other South African language. This would also help to relieve the pressure on the few isiXhosa speaking teachers currently at desegregated schools in Cape Town, who are frequently called upon to translate or sort out a cultural difficulty for non isiXhosa speaking teachers.

Such training would alter teacher attitudes toward language, and shift the orientation of teacher-education programmes (Mda, 2004). As education is the major factor influencing development and change in South Africa, educational reform programmes need to urgently confront the language debate. Ramphela (2009) proposes that all learners should be taught in their mother tongue for the first few years of their schooling. This would require sensitive and practical implementation however, so that schools are not re-segregated by language.

Should this not be possible, learners struggling with English will need constant and thorough extra English classes, at every school, on every level. Ideally, this would involve parents too. This would assist all areas of learning, and also encourage integration. While this appears to be proposing an assimilationist model, the reality is that non English-speaking learners are faced with an English-speaking world, and are therefore struggling academically at schools.

9.2 Staff Meetings

Another critical need is purposive and structured staff meetings and workshops to resolve issues of diversity in *all* schools. This would encourage an openness about difficult issues such as race, culture and religion, which are still often viewed as taboo. Teachers would be able to provide support for each other, and the stigma associated with 'recognising' difference might be dissipated. It would also help white teachers feel more comfortable with 'seeing' and discussing difference. Dornbrack (2008) also recommends providing 'safe spaces' for reflection, which would encourage teachers to contest and articulate dominant practices.

9.3 Diversity Training

This thesis calls for the provision of training and support from the Department of Education with regards to critical multicultural teaching. This would assist teachers significantly in working with diverse learners, helping to provide an inclusive, integrative and empowering education. Including diversity education in all areas of the curriculum would bring about a greater understanding of learners and their backgrounds. While the Department of Education has many urgent issues to attend to, facilitating training courses for teachers in integrated classrooms would help to create a truly South African education model. For the purpose of reaching as many people as possible, training could start with principals and school leadership. This would ensure that the values of learning for diversity become embedded in the educational ethos of South Africa's young democracy.

9.4 Economic support and teacher demographics

Along with the above mentioned interventions, there needs to be greater economic support for teachers from the Department of Education, and an improved teacher-learner ratio. Staff demographics also need to be 'desegregated', so that teachers more closely represent the diversity of their learners. Efforts must to be made to employ teachers of all races at all schools so that learners acquire appropriate role models.

It is also important to remember that when focusing on change, it is both the participants and the structure that needs to be transformed. We cannot focus entirely on teachers, when school and institutional structures still evade tackling issues of colour and power. Thus appeals for interventions from the Department of Education need to include the structural, economic *and* human resource challenges of diversity in our schools.

I have hated the words and

I have loved them, and I

hope I have made them right.

(Markus Zusak. 2007. *The Book Thief*.)

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APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Unstructured Interview Questions

Explain basics. Anything you say remains anonymous. Record consent to interview.

Section 1

1.1

- a. Please describe the characteristics of the learners in your class.
(e.g. anything particular about any of your children?)
- b. What do you enjoy or not enjoy about diversity in classrooms?
- c. Would learners learn better if they were in classes with children of similar backgrounds to their own?

1.2

1. What challenges do you encounter with regards to ... differences? And how do you deal with that?
 - i. Gender
 - ii. Sexuality/ sexual preference
 - iii. Disability
 - iv. Learning ability
 - v. Racial and Cultural
 - vi. Social and economic
 - vii. Language
 - viii. Age

Section 2

2.1

1. Now that the classroom is multicultural, what do you do differently in your teaching practice?
2. What have you learnt from teaching in a classroom with children from various backgrounds?
3. Do any of your colleagues have problems relating to learners that are different from them?
4. Do you experience any tensions within yourself when you relate to learners/parents/staff that are different from you?

2.2

1. What prepared you to teach in a classroom with diverse learners? (Pre-service education, teaching experience; any other?)
2. What help would you need *now*, to do a better job of teaching learners that are different from you and from one another?
3. Is there anywhere you advise someone to go for assistance in working in diverse classrooms?

Section 3

3.1

1. What do you do to effectively practice multicultural education with your learners? (With regards to: teaching, testing, (and relationships)?)

2. How would it help a teacher to be familiar with learners' backgrounds?
(eg. social and economic, cultural)

3.2

1. What does social justice mean to you?
2. How can a teacher address issues of past injustice in classroom practice?
3. Should teachers try and correct past disadvantage with their learners by giving certain learners more support, or should they stop focusing on the past?
4. In what ways do you find yourself focusing on certain learners?
5. What do you think about the view that "stereotypes and prejudice are natural; and teachers should just learn to tolerate others"?
6. How often do you discuss issues of learner difference in your staff meetings?

3.3

1. Should a teacher highlight diversity, or rather focus on just teaching well?
2. What do you feel about a teacher being aware of power dynamics within the classroom?
Are there any ways to address that?

Section 4

4.1.

1. Some teachers have mentioned that academic standards are lower because of classroom diversity, what is your view on that?
2. How would you focus on preventing standards from being lowered because of poorly prepared learners?

4.2

1. Should staff demographics in the school be representative of the learners?
2. What are your personal views about addressing diversity in classrooms and schools?

4.3

1. Where do you see South Africa's future education going in terms of inclusion?

APPENDIX TWO: LETTER OF PERMISSION

Navrae
Enquiries **Dr RS Cornelissen**
IMibuzo
Telefoon
Telephone **(021) 467-2286**
IFoni
Faks
Fax **(021) 425-7445**
IFeksi



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

Western Cape Education Department

ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Verwysing
Reference **20070420-0015**
ISalathiso

Miss Claire Davies
Institute of Intercultural and Diversity Studies South Africa (iNCUDISA)
Faculty of Humanities
Universit of Cape Town
RONDEBOSCH
7700

Dear Miss C. Davies

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: WHAT SALIENT ISSUES IN EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES CAN INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEXTUAL THEORY OF DIVERSITY.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from 23rd April 2007 to 21st September 2007.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December 2007).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the Principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as submitted to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Education Research.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Education Research
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen

APPENDIX THREE: COVERING LETTER

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Social Sciences
Institute of Diversity and Intercultural Studies
University of Cape Town,
Cape Town
23/04/07

Dear Principal,

Theoretical concepts of learning would be useless if not passed on in the backdrop of school-based practice. When faced with realistic situations and circumstances in the schools and classrooms, the possibilities of the learning and teaching theories become relevant and relatively applicable.

Experienced teachers know what is “embedded” in the day-to-day work of a school. Their “rich mine of expertise, should be drawn upon in the professional education of each new generation of teachers” (Hagger, Burn and McIntre, 1995, p. 8).

The question is not whether there is expertise in schools, but whether those experts have the opportunity to document and leave behind a legacy for new teachers regarding the tools, the skills, the experiences the ideology and the actions, that served as the crux of their successful practice.

Can you please give me the opportunity to sit with you and explain the rational behind the research and to liase with you on the logistics of doing the interview? The study seeks to document teachers’ classroom experiences as well as the way students from different backgrounds, attitudes and orientations relate to diverse aspects of classroom. The information obtained would be useful in formulating teacher education programmes to prepare teachers for more effective practice within contemporary classrooms. It would also provide the opportunity to put pertinent information on record for policy makers and parents.

The process would require that teachers be interviewed on a one-on-one basis at their own convenience, in any place on your school premises, corridors, fields or even under a tree.

We appreciate the busy schedule that teachers have and are at your disposal with regards to where and when the interviews would be conducted. The duration depends entirely on how much experience each teacher would share.

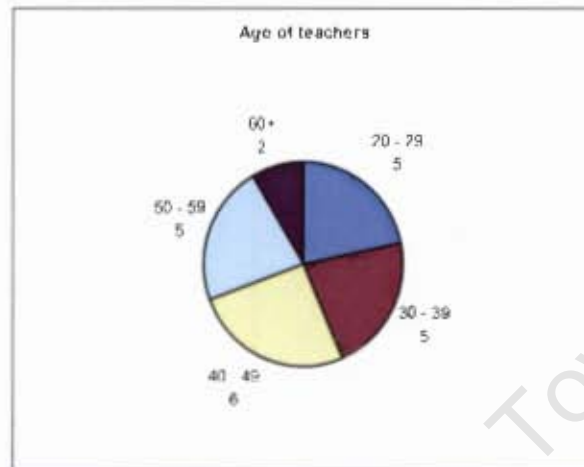
Anonymity of schools and respondents is guaranteed. We do hope that you will allow us this opportunity.

Sincerely

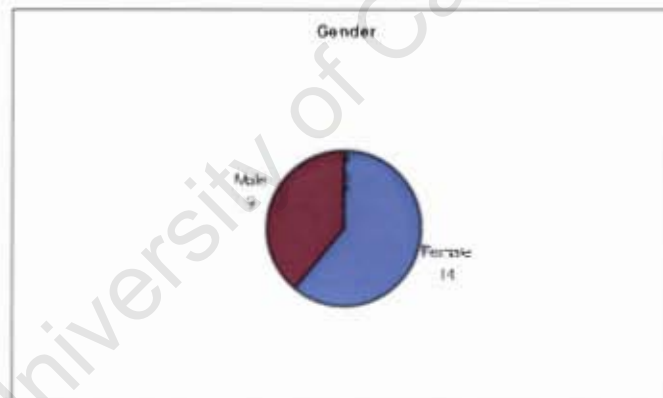
Claire Davies

APPENDIX FOUR: GRAPHS

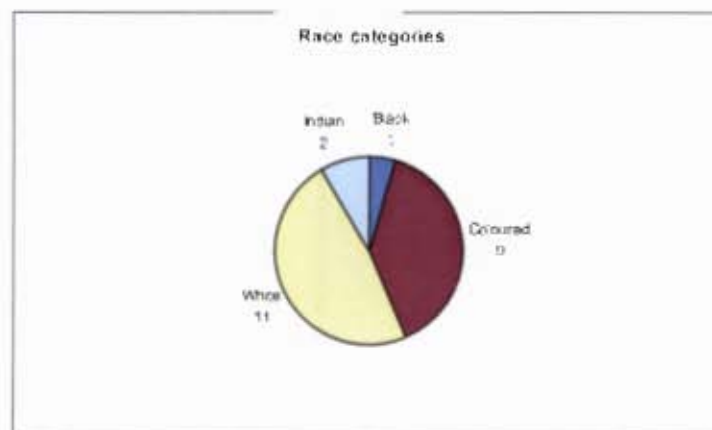
Graph One: Age of Teachers



Graph Two: Gender of Teachers



Graph Three: Racial categories of Teachers



APPENDIX FIVE: THEMES AND CODES

The initial themes were as follows:

1. Colour-blindness versus race cognisance.
2. The possession of a racial 'grammar' (openness to discussing racial issues)
3. The possession of a past 'grammar' (openness to discussing issues of the past)
4. Racial discrepancies between teachers
5. Influences of personal background
6. Influence of the age and experience of teachers
7. Transformation from past beliefs
8. Lack of resources in schools (leads to less diversity work)
9. Problems caused by low socio economics
10. Big class sizes
11. Lack of diversity training in schools
12. Language problems/ Low English abilities among learners
13. Using isiXhosa teachers to interpret and mediate
14. Assimilation
15. Lack of integration at schools
16. Lack of parental support at schools

These were then translated into 'codes'. The codes were as follows:

1. Use of constitution to guide teaching
2. Use of the word 'tolerance'
3. Use of tokenism
4. Replacing 'race' with 'culture'
5. Presence of 'othering'
6. Diversity training
7. Language issues
8. Integration
9. Assimilation
10. Academic standards
11. Reference to the 'past'
12. Stereotyping
13. Multicultural teaching
14. Colour-blindness
15. Colour consciousness
16. Christian centred
17. Parent involvement
18. Demographics
19. Equality versus equity
20. Diversity grammar
21. Curriculum
22. Using Xhosa teachers
23. Problems of teaching
24. Meetings to discuss diversity
25. Learning barriers